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THE
COUNTRIES AND TRIBES
OF THE
PERSIAN GULF.

THE

COUNTRIES AND TRIBES

OF THE

PERSIAN GULF.

BY

COLONEL S. B. MILES.

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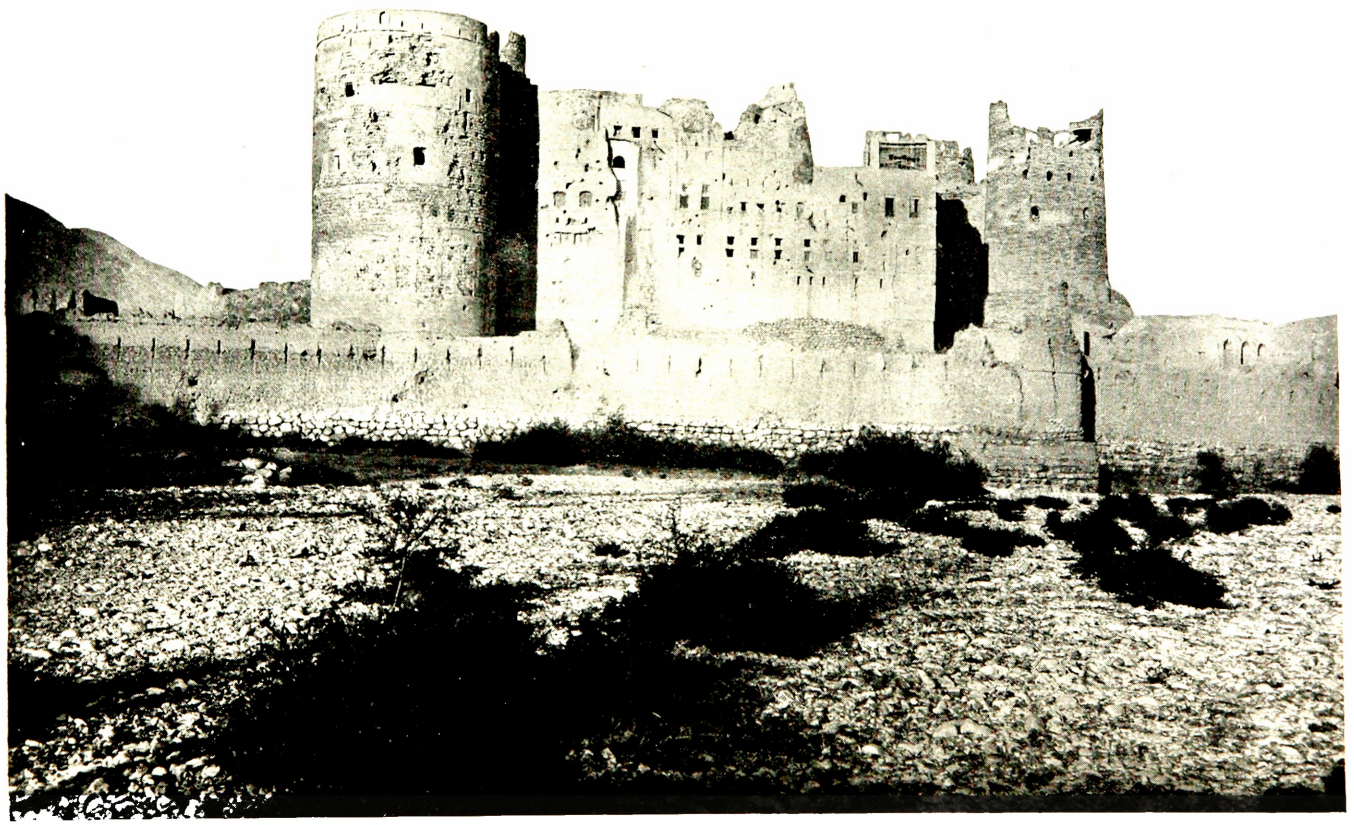


THE OLD FORT OR CASTLE AT ROSTAK.

[*See p.* 239]

CHAPTER V.

THE AL-BU SAEEDI DYNASTY.

THE Yaareba had been the most powerful dynasty that Oman had ever seen. It had held sway for about a century and a quarter and had during that period, by the administrative ability, energy and enterprise of its princes, raised the status, power, and prosperity of the country to a greater height than it had ever previously attained. Yet its fall was rapid, humiliating, and irretrievable, and the star of those enterprising princes, who had done so much for Oman, for good and evil, had set for ever. The date of this event, viz., 1749, is confirmed by Niebuhr, who tells us that in the year 1765 Ahmed bin Saeed had reigned sixteen years.

Relieved of the anxiety and perils of civil war, Ahmed was now able to turn his attention to administrative affairs, and by a quick move made himself master of Rostak, which had been for about 125 years the capital of Oman, and established his residence there, appropriating to himself all the castles—*bait al mal*—or crown lands, and other property.

In the main fortresses of the country, viz., Nezwa, Bahila, Zikki, and Semail, etc., he appointed men of his own selection as governors, and then with a strong hand set to work to repress many of the abuses that had crept into the State. In place of the thievish rabble soldiery maintained by his predecessors, he substituted a well-equipped and efficient body of African slaves, who are said to have been well behaved and faithful.

In order to still further consolidate his position, Ahmed, shortly after his accession to power, formed an alliance with the dynasty he had overthrown by espousing the daughter of the late Imam Saif bin Sultan, by whom he had a son named Mohammed.

Nothing, however, served so well to confirm him in the Imamate as his firm and sagacious administration, which soon gained him the loyal support and respect of the people.

With the fall of the Yaareba Dynasty the policy of adventure, or predatory exploits, which had distinguished them during their rule, fell also, and with the rise of the Al-Bu Saeedis the people of Oman returned under the wise guidance of Ahmed bin Saeed to the more simple and legitimate ways of commercial intercourse with other nations. The city of Muscat had rapidly recovered from the depression caused by the temporary occupation of the Persians, and became more populous and thriving than ever.

The Imam, looking round to see how he could best encourage the seaborne trade of his merchants, whose vessels at this period visited not only the ports of the Persian Gulf but those of Western India, Java, Mauritius, the Red Sea and East Africa, naturally directed his attention first to his own colonies in Africa, where it was necessary to obtain recognition of his sovereignty and make his authority felt and respected. In the ensuing north-east monsoon (1750), he accordingly despatched ships to the ports of Mombasa, Kilwa, and Zanzibar, appointing men on whom he could depend as governors. Although trade relations had no doubt existed between Oman and East Africa from immemorial times, as the slave markets of Persia and Mesopotamia could have been supplied in no other way, it was not until the first half of the seventeenth century that the Arabs began to acquire territorial possessions there, when, having been invited by the inhabitants of the country to protect them from their Portuguese oppressors, expeditions were sent from Muscat to capture and occupy Kilwa and Mombasa.

At this time the trade, though still quite undeveloped, was of considerable importance and value, consisting chiefly of slaves, ivory, copal and timber; and a large number of vessels were engaged in

taking from Oman cargoes of dates and other articles in exchange for the commodities above mentioned.

The prosperity of Oman trade about this period was partly due to the increased security open to navigators by the disappearance of the most formidable piratical fleet then menacing commerce in the Indian Ocean, viz., that of Toolajee Angria of Gheriah, from whose depredations the Arabs and Persians had suffered very severely until it had been finally crushed by Admiral Watson. As the Angrias were of Arab extraction it may be as well to give a slight sketch of the rise of these notorious pirates, who paralyzed commerce in the Indian Seas for so many years. In the year 1643, a Muscat dhow was wrecked off the Indian coast near Rajapore in the dominions of the Sahujee Raja. The captain was killed and most of the crew made captives. Among the latter was a half-caste Arab, named Sambhoo, who, being a man of uncommon courage and ability, soon distinguished himself and was able, after many adventures and exploits, to establish himself on the coast in partial independence as a pirate. He was killed in a fight with the Moghul's troops in 1675, leaving a son, Poora, who successfully carried on his father's lucrative profession, and was killed in 1686. Poora's son, Kanowja, was a very bold and spirited leader and became the most noted of the Angria family. About 1713 he began persistently to harass the English, and on this account several expeditions were sent against him from Bombay. He had, however, by this time established himself in a very strong position at Gheriah and was able to resist the efforts of the East India Company with ease. Kanowja died in 1740 and left two sons, Sambub and Toolajee, who were a terror to all traders. The end came in 1756, when Gheriah was captured by Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive, who with a squadron of fourteen men-of-war and a strong military force utterly routed out and destroyed the pirate fleet. A full account, no doubt, of this event reached Muscat shortly afterwards, and the news was naturally received with much rejoicing by the merchants.

It is fair to conjecture that Hyder Naik, who throughout his career had missed no opportunity of showing his enmity to the English cause in India, was actuated by the same spirit in sending a diplomatic

agent to Muscat, as he might hope thereby to gain the Imam over to the French and Mysore alliance. Ahmed bin Saeed was, however, too prudent and sensible a man to allow himself to be entangled in this way, though, as the course of events during the remainder of the century proved, the Mysore agents were not without political influence in Oman.

It was very soon after his accession to the Imamate that Ahmed made known his intention to follow the policy of his Yaareba predecessors, in refusing to allow the English to build a factory at Muscat. Towards this end negotiations had been carried on intermittently for nearly a century between the English in Western India and successive Imams, but to no purpose, as the Arabs remained firm on this qoint. The decision was probably due to native experience of Portuguese and Dutch encroachments in the Persian Gulf during the seventeenth century. But it was not only the English who were denied a factory ; the Dutch and even the French were treated in the same manner and kept at a distance. The French do not appear to have commenced trading operations in the Persian Gulf before the early part of the eighteenth century, when they located an agent at Busra ; their vessels constantly touched at Muscat, however, during this period, and their relations with the Oman Government were always friendly. The first communications of a political nature appear to have taken place in 1749, when Ahmed bin Saeed was residing at Aufy, near Sohar, previous to his final contest with Belarab.

About the month of February of that year three French privateers from Mauritius entered the port of Muscat, avowedly with the object of intercepting English merchant ships, although it was well known that France and England were then at peace. The largest of these vessels was the *Conde.* Finding a large English merchant ship in the cove the privateers very unscrupulously endeavoured to cut her out. The Wali Khalfan bin Mohammed resented this breach of neutrality, opened fire on them with the guns of the fort, and compelled them to sheer off. Thwarted in his attempt on the English ship, the captain of the *Conde* sailed

for Gombroon, where he attacked and partly destroyed the English factory. After this exploit he steered for Sohar, where a correspondence took place between him and the Imam Ahmed regarding the affair at Muscat.

About the year 1758-59 the Imam, having consolidated his power and gained complete ascendancy over the Oman tribes was able to undertake operations in Al-Sirr, generally known as the pirate coast, in order to reduce to subjection the Joasmees and other warlike tribes, who had hitherto remained entirely independent. The Joasmees, who are a branch of the great Hawala clan, occupying the Persian coast from Gombroon to Ras Berdistan, was so named after Shaikh Kasim, the grandfather of the notorious Shaikh Rashid bin Muttar, who ruled at this time and who resided at Julfar or Ras al-Khyma. The Imam first marched against Khasab, when the Shaikh Hassan bin Abdulla al-Shihoo at once submitted. Whilst at Khasab the Imam heard of a Yaareba revolt in Al-Sharkiyah, and having ordered Khalfan bin Mohammed to proceed to Julfar with all his ships, started at once for Jaalan, where he gathered the tribes and suppressed the revolt with a strong hand. On his return to Khasab, the Imam found it advisable to replace Khalfan by a more energetic officer, and he, therefore, summoned Seyyid Ali bin Saif and dispatched him with four ships and ten dhows to Al-Sirr, with orders to establish a strict blockade. These orders were followed up so closely by stopping the pearl-fishery and intercepting trade that in course of time he reduced all the ports on that coast and made them, with the exception of Julfar, recognize the supremaey of the Imam.

This satisfactory result took place in 1762, and in the following year Shaikh Sakar, with his uncle, Abdulla, and Mohammed bin Ali, proceeded to Rostak, where at an interview with the Imam it was arranged that the blockading fleet should be withdrawn and that the Joasmee port of Julfar should be considered independent of the Imam's authority. The political state of affairs then outlined remained unaltered for more than twenty years.

In the year 1761 another French privateering expedition, con-

sisting of the *Boulogne*, 14 guns, with a smaller vessel as consort, arrived at Muscat from Port Louis. The *Boulogne* was commanded by Count D'Estaing, who had accompanied Count Lally to India, and had been taken prisoner by the English at the siege of Madras in November, 1758, and sent to England. Having been liberated on parole soon after, he returned to France, where he broke his parole and sailed for the Mauritius, and with the view of taking his revenge on the English, fitted out a buccaneering expedition to injure their trade in the Persian Gulf.

At Muscat Count D'Estaing followed the example of the *Conde*, by ignoring the laws of neutrality and attacking an English ship, but the Wali Khalfan bin Mohammed saved the vessel and avenged the insult to his flag by firing on the *Boulogne* and driving her off.

Proceeding to Gombroon D'Estaing broke open and plundered the English factory, took several prisoners and then sailed for Sumatra, from whence he returned to the Mauritius.

About this time may be dated the commencement of the Muscat trade with Mauritius, which had been taken possession of in 1715 by the French. The first trading vessel from the island probably dropped anchor at Muscat in the time of the Imam Ahmed, and the trade continued without interruption for about fifty years, but it never rose to any great proportions. The article chiefly exported to Arabia was sugar, the island receiving in return salt fish, dates, and coffee. The governor, M. Malartic, used to send acceptable presents of cannon and gunpowder to the Imam, who dispatched suitable gifts in exchange. In 1764 the famous traveller, Carsten Niebuhr, arrived at Muscat from Bombay and remained for some time collecting information respecting the Imam's dominions, though, as he tells us, he did not visit the interior ; his map, though of course crude, is the first ever published of the country. The Imam had four ships with which he traded with his own possessions in East Africa, while the revenue derived from the Customs at Muscat was about a lakh of rupees—Europeans paid five per cent. and Arab traders paid six per cent.

At the close of 1769 Kereem Khan demanded from the Imam Ahmed a large ship, which had been purchased by the latter from the Governor of Hormuz, on the ground that it belonged to Persia, and further required him to pay arrears of tribute which had not been received for many years, but both these demands were peremptorily refused. The Imam's reply as regards the tribute was to the effect that it had been exacted from Oman by Nadir Shah, who could not be denied, and that if Kereem Khan wanted it he must be prepared to take it by force. In 1776 Ahmed sent a fleet with 5,000 men on board to the Gulf to operate against Bushire, to compel the restitution of certain property detained by the Persians, but the expedition proved abortive as it never reached its destination and returned to Muscat.

In 1772 Shaikh Rashid was in alliance with the Imam and co-operated with Khalfan bin Mohammed, Governor of Muscat, against the Persians, and did some damage in destroying galleots. The Shaikh continued to assist the Imam in the war with Persia, which dragged on languidly until 1774, when Nasir Khan, Governor of Bushire, was directed by the Shah to prosecute the campaign vigorously or to make terms with the Imam. The Persian terms offered were so preposterous that the Imam rejected them and again refused tribute. It was while engaged in this war that the Imam Ahmed undertook an expedition to Busra, which, though of little avail, redounded much to his personal credit and renown.

Late in the year 1774 the Shah of Persia, Kereem Khan, becoming jealous of the increasing opulence and importance of the city of Busra, which was largely diverting to itself the trade of India formerly flowing to Bundar Abbas and other Persian ports, and alarmed also at the mutinous spirit of his soldiery, resolved to gratify his ambition on the one hand, and give his troops employment on the other, by making war on Turkey and in taking possession of Busra.

Seeking a pretext for his action, Kereem Khan demanded the head of the Wali of Baghdad, Omar Pasha, who had offended the Persians by levying a poll tax on the Shihr pilgrims to Najaf and

Kerbela. Another pretext was the aid given by the Pasha of Baghdad to the ruler of Oman in 1743, which, it was averred, prevented the Persians from subduing that province. The head of Omar Pasha having been refused by the Sublime Porte, which had itself issued orders to him for the collection of the tax, the Shah declared war and began to concentrate an army at Shiraz. Intelligence of the Shah's intentions reached Busra in January, 1775, and the Mutasalim, or governor, of that city, Suliman Agha, at once reported the matter to the Wali of Baghdad, Omar Pasha, who being then in a critical position was unable to afford any assistance. However, he addressed an urgent appeal to the Imam of Oman for a powerful fleet to oppose the Persians and protect Busra, and to this appeal the Imam sent a favourable response, promising to bring a fleet to the aid of the Turks.

The Persian army, commanded by Sadik Khan, a brother of the Shah, arrived at Howaza in March, crossed the Shat al-Arab in April, and encamped near Marghil. Its strength is estimated at 50,000 men by Abraham Parsons, who was at Busra at this time, and who gives many details of the siege. He tells us in his book of travels that the English Resident, Mr. Henry Moore, was supported at Busra by two of the East India Company's war vessels, viz., the *Eagle*, 14 guns, commanded by Captain Anderson, and the *Success*, ketch, 9 guns, besides two ketches of 14 guns each, built for the Pasha in Bombay, commanded by an English midshipman under British colours. At the request of the Mutasalim, or governor, of the town, Suliman Agha, these vessels were ordered to prevent the passage of the Shat al-Arab by the Persian army, as far as lay in their power. With this view they first proceeded to assist the Turks in obstructing the passage of the Persian transports by laying a cable, part of which consisted of an iron chain seventy fathoms long, supported on boats, across the river. This cable, however, was soon broken by the tide and proved of little avail. The *Eagle* and *Success* for some time acted vigilantly and fired on the Persian vessels coming up the river, and in this way did some execution, but shortly after, under verbal instructions given apparently to avoid complications, they sailed to Bushire, where they found seven English ships at anchor.

On board the *Eagle* was Mr. Green, a former Resident at Busra, who had been taken prisoner in the brig *Tiger* when it was captured by the Persians about two years before, and had returned to Busra on parole to receive his property. While the siege and blockade of Busra were proceeding, the Imam Ahmed, in fulfilment of his promise to Omar Pasha, continued the preparation of his naval armament at Muscat, and in the middle of August, 1775, received reports of its being ready for sea. It was composed of the *Rahmani*, on which the Imam himself embarked, nine other square-rigged ships, seventy galleots and trankies, and fifty dhows full of men. Passing Bushire on September 11th, the fleet anchored in the Shat al-Arab, off Deep Water Point, a few days later. The motives of the Imam in undertaking this costly expedition were partly to cement friendly relations with the Turks, to whom he owed some gratitude for help afforded during Taki Khan's invasion, and partly to strike a blow at the Persians, with whom he was at war, and it was not without a feeling of disappointment that he found the Turks much weaker and the Persians much stronger than he had anticipated. After breaking through the iron chain which the Persians had thrown across the river to bar its progress, the fleet attacked and dispersed the Persian galleots under Shaikh Nasir, the governor of Bushire, and was thus able to pour supplies into the town, which was in dire straits from want of food. But beyond this, little appears to have been done and Suliman Agha's hope of being able, with the help of his Muscat allies, to compel Sadik Khan to raise the siege, had to be abandoned. The Imam then vainly endeavoured to mediate for peace between the two powers, while Hyder Naik's envoy to Persia, who arrived at this juncture in the Persian Gulf from India, seems to have been prepared to do the same.

The Imam had serious thoughts of sending his second son, Saeed, to Kereem Khan to make peace for the Turks, as well as for himself, but this scheme was not carried out, and the Imam Ahmed returned to Muscat with his fleet at the end of the year 1775.

The unfortunate Omar Pasha had in the meantime been sacrificed to the anxiety of the Sublime Porte to appease the Persian monarch,

having been beheaded in the month of July, 1775. As a sequel to the above narrative it may be mentioned that in 1778 Captain Anderson of the *Eagle* was directed by the Resident at Bushire to embark on board his ship to Muscat a Turkish envoy with a letter of thanks for the valuable aid given by the Imam during the siege of Busra, and promising that a subsidy should be paid annually to the Oman Government for the service rendered. In the year 1775 the Imam Ahmed and Shaikh Rashid bin Muttar, the Joasmee, were again at war, the Joasmees having become more powerful than ever both by land and sea. Two years later, however, in 1777, Shaikh Rashid resigned the leadership from old age and infirmity and was succeeded by his son, Sakar, between whom and the Imam Ahmed a truce was made shortly after.

In July, 1775, H.M. Frigate *Seahorse*, 20 guns, commanded by Captain Farmer, anchored at Muscat from Bushire and remained about two months. It is interesting to remark that one of her midshipmen on board was the future hero of the Nile and Trafalgar—Horatio Nelson. It was probably about this time that the Imam Ahmed despatched his frigate, the *Rahmani*, to Mangalore to enquire why the export of rice had been prohibited, as the want of it was very greatly felt in Oman. The envoy sent in the *Rahmani* was well received by the representative of Hyder Naik at Mangalore, who explained the cause of the non-shipment of rice to foreign ports. Some time afterwards Hyder Naik sent a return envoy to Muscat, with instructions to sign a convention with the Imam, and to remain there as Mysore political agent. For this agent a house was built at Muscat, and exists there to this day under the name of the Bait al-Nawab, or the Nawab's house. Salil bin Rizak, who gives the date of this voyage as about 1776, states that after leaving Mangalore, the *Rahmani* proceeded to attack a pirate nest and destroy it.

In May, 1778, a third breach of neutrality was committed by the French : an English merchant ship bound to Bushire from Surat, with a cargo of 500 bales of cloth on board, was chased by a French privateer in the Gulf of Oman, and ran for shelter into Muscat. The privateer followed and endeavoured with her boats to cut her out,

but the Wali Khalfan bin Mohammed protected her, and not only sent a letter of protest to the aggressor but opened fire, and the Frenchman, after a loss of five killed, desisted from the attempt and sailed away. About a month subsequent to this event, war broke out again between the Imam and his persistent enemy the Joasmee, who had taken some Persian ships on the plea that they had Muscat property on board. They soon after joined Shaikh Nasir at Bushire in trying to recover Bahrain from the Attoobees, and their ships became very active in the Gulf at this time, committing acts of piracy and insulting the Muscat coast. Shaikh Sakar, who, as we have seen, succeeded his father in 1777, was indeed so bold and troublesome in his depredations that the Imam soon found it necessary to undertake operations against him. In November, 1778, therefore, a fleet consisting of twelve ships and a hundred smaller craft were dispatched to Julfar. In consequence, however, of the shallowness of the water preventing the larger ships approaching within two or three miles of the shore, their guns could not reach the town, and the demonstration failed in its object. In the following month Shaikh Sakar marched with a large force to raid the Batineh and besiege Rostak, but nothing resulted from this campaign and he soon after returned to Julfar. It was while Shaikh Sakar was engaged on this expedition that the first recorded instance of an attack by the Joasmees on an English ship occurred. In December, 1778, an English snow (i.e. brig) with despatches on board and manned by an European master and mate with a crew of Lascars, was met in the Gulf by six Joasmee dhows, and after a stubborn fight of three days, in which thirty Arabs were wounded, was captured and taken into Julfar. The Resident at Bushire, Mr. Beaumont, tried to ransom her, but the Shaikh refused to surrender her for less than 4,000 rupees.

In January, 1779, the ketch *Success* on her way from Muscat to Busra was attacked by eight or ten Julfar dhows, but luckily repulsed her assailants and escaped. In the following month the English snow *Assistance*, commanded by Captain Johnston, was attacked by Julfar pirates, but having taken the precaution to take

in some Belooch soldiers at Muscat, she beat off the pirates and arrived at Bushire in safety. The war between the Imam Ahmed and Shaikh Sakar continued to be carried on with unabated vigour at this time. The Joasmee piratical vessels cruised in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea and committed great depredations in spite of constant efforts of the Muscat fleet to suppress them, and they did not hesitate to attack European ships whenever they thought they could do so with success. Great anarchy prevailed, as all the various tribes in the Gulf seemed to be at variance and peace was not restored until 1785. One of the serious troubles that befell the Imam Ahmed and perplexed him in his old age was the ungrateful and contumacious conduct of some of his sons, who at this period began to quarrel among themselves and to intrigue with the more powerful tribes about the succession.

The Imam's eldest son, Hilal, was now blind and incapacitated for rule; Saeed, the second son, was a man of weak, indolent, and voluptuous character—his father had given him the Wilayet of Nezwa, where he made himself very unpopular by his exactions and oppressions; Kais, the third son, was headstrong and ambitious and inclined to give trouble, but as the Imam prudently presented him with the Wilayet of Sohar, he did not concern himself much with the quarrels between his brothers that disturbed his father during the later years of his life. The next two, Saif and Sultan, were the most unruly of the Imam's children; being descended through their mother from the ancient and noble Jiboor tribe, they considered themselves as having a higher claim to the succession than their brother Saeed, of whom they were very jealous and whom they had long feared and detested. Apprehensive of the approaching end of the old chieftain, they began an intrigue with the Joasmee, Naeem, and other powerful tribes in order to gain their support in the coming struggle. The first overt act of insubordination towards their father occurred in the year 1780. Having obtained the assistance of a small party from Nakhl, the two brothers made a night attack on the fort of Burka on the Batineh coast.

In spite of a strong defence, in which the governor was killed,

an entry was forced, and possession gained. As soon as the news reached the Imam, he set out to vindicate his authority and compel the surrender of the offenders. The fort was bombarded and after a long resistance the sons came out to crave forgiveness of their father; this was at once granted and the troops returned to Rostak.

The fact of Saif and Sultan having been assisted in their adventure by a party from Nakhl naturally caused the Imam to throw the blame on the governor of that town, Mohammed bin Suliman al-Yaarebi, who, it will be remembered, had been given that district as an appanage on the death of Belarab bin Himyar in 1749. Rejecting Mohammed's protestations and disavowals of his complicity in the matter, the Imam collected an army to punish him and soon appeared before the walls of the fortress. Mohammed, however, had strong partisans in the Naeem and other tribes of Dhahireh, and Nakhl was so well guarded that the attack proved a failure. The Imam's force gradually melted away and he returned to Rostak discomfited. He then turned his attention to the Batineh and led an army to Hazm, where the Yaareba and other tribes had revolted, and having obtained some success, he recovered his prestige to a certain extent, and then returned to the capital.

In 1781 three French privateers from Mauritius, one of 36 guns, commanded by Captain De Cheny, one of 11 guns, and one of 14, came to the Gulf of Oman, and having captured on the way an English ship the *Beglerbeg*, commanded by Captain Peter Scott, bound from Surat to Moocha, entered the cove of Muscat. After a vain attempt to seize an English ship at anchor here, the privateer sailed up the Gulf, and on June 15th captured off Sohar, after a short engagement, the Imam's frigate *Salih*, of 50 guns, laden with goods from a British Indian port to Busra. With a prize crew on board the *Salih* was sent to Severndroog, and there sold to the Mahrattas. One of the *Salih's* boats having escaped capture brought the news to land, and a message was at once dispatched to the Imam to inform him of the event. Two months later, one of the privateers happened to return to Muscat for refreshments and the

Imam immediately ordered her to be seized and her crew made prisoners in retaliation, but shortly after this order was reversed and the Frenchmen were sent to the Mauritius together with an envoy, who was instructed to demand restitution of the *Salih* and her cargo, which was valued at twelve lakhs of rupees. The mind of the Imam Ahmed was deeply wounded by the action of the French, for whom he had always felt much cordiality and for whom he had always shown great consideration. This unjustifiable proceeding almost caused a temporary rupture of friendly relations, and the Imam immediately addressed strong remonstrances, not only to the Mauritius, but the French Government, through the medium of his friend, Monsieur J. F. X. Rousseau, the Consul-General at Baghdad. This gentleman, who was born and brought up at Ispahan, entered the French consular service and proved himself a good diplomatist and linguist. He had been for many years in communication with the Imam Ahmed and had much influence with him. He represented the case fully to the French Government at Paris, who eventually expressed regret at the occurrence and purchased a ship, called the *Courier de l'Isle de France*, to be sent out to Muscat to replace the *Salih*. This was accordingly done, but the promised vessel was taken on the way by an English cruiser, and it was not until the year 1790 that a second small vessel, called the *Escurial*, but re-named the *Salih*, was convoyed to Muscat by the *La Thetis*, frigate, commanded by Captain Macnamara and delivered to the Imam Saeed. Captain Macnamara is said to have negotiated, under instructions from the French Foreign Office, a convention with the Imam, but it seems to have been confined to expressions of mutual friendship and goodwill.

Going back to the month of February, 1781, we find that Saif and Sultan, who were residing in the small castle of Naaman, near Burka, being eager to put themselves in an independent position, resolved to make a desperate effort to possess themselves of Muscat, and made good plans which at first seemed to promise success. Having solicited the support of the Beni Jabir, they proceeded to Muscat with a small party and requested permission to enter the town, and were

unsuspectingly admitted by the governor, who recognized them as sons of the Imam Ahmed. The two brothers then lost no time in seducing the commandants of the two forts, Merani and Jelali, of which they thus obtained possession. The Wali, finding himself deceived, at once apprised the Imam of what had occurred, and endeavoured to recover the forts, but Saif and Sultan opened fire on the town and soon laid part of it in ruins.

Incensed at the news the old Imam quitted Rostak with a large force to reduce his rebellious sons to obedience, and on arriving at Muttrah ordered the merchants and inhabitants of Muscat to bring their effects to the former town for security. He then demanded the surrender of the forts, and on this being refused he commenced hostilities. In the meantime Saif and Sultan despatched letters to Shaikh Sakar, the Joasmee, to solicit assistance, which request was readily complied with. Shaikh Sakar, however, instead of joining the brothers at Muscat, deemed it more politic to march direct on the capital, and gathering contingents from the tribes on the way, arrived there in April, 1781. This diversion had its intended effect; the Imam, dreading the Joasmee invasion, made peace with his sons and agreed that each of them should retain one of the forts, and further, that there should be an amnesty to all concerned.

For some reason the Imam shortly after changed his mind and retained Merani for himself, allowing his sons to hold Jelali between them. Tranquillity for some months ensued, and then another and more serious effort was made by Saif and Sultan. Having decoyed their brother Saeed to Naaman Castle, they treacherously seized and bound him, brought him down by boat to Muscat, and threw him into a dungeon in Fort Jelali. Divining, rightly, no doubt, that Saeed's life was in danger, the aged Imam hurried down from his capital at the close of December, and passing Naaman on January 1st, 1782, arrived at Muscat, where he occupied the old Portuguese "gareza," or cathedral. On the refusal of his sons to surrender, the Imam ordered the Commandant of Merani to open fire on the fort of Jelali, and a vigorous bombardment ensued which was supported by the Imam's ships of war lying to the eastward. The heavy crossfire to

which Jelali was then subjected would soon have compelled submission, but in the meantime, Saeed, having bribed his gaoler, managed to escape from the fort by being lowered by a rope on to the rocks below during the night, and was able to rejoin his father in the town. Having gained his end by the sudden deliverance of his favourite son from the prospect of a cruel death, for the usual custom among the Arabs in such cases is to let their victims come to a tardy and lingering fate by starvation, the Imam at once put a stop to the bombardment and offered terms to Saif and Sultan, who, after the loss of their hostage, Saeed, had nothing to expect from prolonged hostilities, and had no resource but to yield the fort. With a view to prevent any further acts of rebellion on the part of his two sons, the Imam, on leaving Muscat, took Saif with him in custody, and detained him under surveillance for many months at Rostak.

The remainder of Ahmed bin Saeed's active and stirring life was calm and uneventful. He died at an advanced age at Rostak on December 15th, 1783, after a reign of thirty-four years, and was buried near the Great Mosque. His tomb bears a long inscription, of which after quotations from the Koran, the following is a translation :—

> " This is the grave of our Master our Seyyid, the light of our darkness, the Imam, the just, benevolent, the perfect, the learned, the worker, the pious, the devout, the ornament, the Imam of Mohammed, the administrator, of the Faithful, the banner of fighter in the cause of religion, the Imam of Mussulmans.
>
> " Ahmed bin Saeed bin Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Khalif bin Saeed al-Boo Saeedi, the Azdi, the Omani, the Ibadhi. May God have mercy on him and pardon him.
>
> " His death occurred on the morning of Monday the nineteenth of the month of Al-Moharram in the year one thousand one hundred and ninety-eight. 19th Moharram, 1198 A.H." [A.D. 1783].

On the death of the Imam, the Kadhis and Shaikhs assembled at Rostak, and in accordance with the expressed wish of their great

prince, elected his second son Saeed to succeed him. No opposition was offered to this election at the time by any member of the family, and Saeed, having taken quiet possession of the capital, Rostak, assumed the administration. All the forts that were in the possession of Ahmed submitted to Saeed unreservedly, the three forts of Al-Hazm, Nakhl and Sohar, remaining in the hands of the Yaareba, Mohammed bin Suliman and Kais respectively.

The change, however, that soon took place in the affairs of Oman was lamentable ; the land that had been so well and firmly guided by Ahmed fell now, in the hands of the weak and incompetent Saeed, into a state of confusion and anarchy, and the fierce animosities and jealousies of the tribes burst forth without restraint ; the most prominent consequences perhaps of the change being the triumph of political ascendancy from the Hinawa faction to that of the Ghafiris.

Though Saif and Sultan did not oppose the election of their brother, they well understood the danger to which they were exposed from that quarter, and lost no time in appealing to their friend, Shaikh Sakar, the Joasmee, to help them in dispossessing Saeed of the Imamate. The appeal was not made in vain. In 1784 Shaikh Sakar, having gathered the Shemal tribes, declared war against the Imam, and soon captured the towns of Hamra, Shargah, and Rams, as well as Khor Fakan.

The Imam's operations against the Joasmees and their allies were conducted with much vigour by land and sea, and the war continued for some time, but the towns taken by the latter were not recovered ; the campaign terminated without any material success having been gained by the Imam.

The failure of the efforts of the Joasmee Shaikh to overthrow Saeed and to establish Saif as Imam in his stead was a bitter blow to the two brothers, who now felt that it was placing their lives in jeopardy to remain any longer in Oman. Saif accordingly sailed for East Africa and landed first at Lamoo, where the Imam's government was not represented, with the intention of subverting Saeed's authority on that coast, and forming for himself an independent kingdom. His intrigues and influence advanced so rapidly that Saeed, becoming

alarmed, sent his son Hamed with a small force to counteract him, but as Hamed learned on arrival that Saif had died shortly before, he returned home.

Quitting Oman at the same time as Saif, Sultan sailed to Gwader on the Mekran coast, from whence he proceeded to Kelat to seek the hospitality of Nasir Khan. The Belooch ruler not only received him honourably and accorded him protection, but also presented him with the town and harbour of Gwader, with permission to retain half the revenue as appanage. This port remains in possession of the Muscat government to this day.

On September 1st, 1785, three French men-of-war arrived at Muscat from the Mauritius, which place they had left in June of the same year. The largest of these was the *Venus*, frigate of 44 guns, commanded by the Count de Roselie; the second was the *Prévoyance* of 8 guns, commanded by Chevalier Saulnier, and the third the *Amphitrite*, also of 8 guns, commanded by Captain Lambert. In the interview with the Wali Mohammed Khalfan, Count de Roselie announced that he had been entrusted with a mission to obtain the Imam's sanction to the building of a factory at Muscat by the French East India Company, for the furtherance of their trade. The Count also, doubtless, conveyed the congratulations of the King of France to Saeed on his accession, the news of which had been duly notified at Paris by Consul-General Rousseau. The Count's request to erect a factory was met, like all previous applications of a similar nature, by a courteous but positive refusal, the Wali informing him that the Imam's orders on the point were irrevocable and that it was useless to press the question. On leaving Muscat the *Venus* sailed for the Persian Gulf and visited Busra and Bushire.

As time went on the Imam's conduct became more obnoxious to the people than ever. He took no pains to win their affection and gradually estranged most of his friends and adherents. This discontent went so far that about the end of the year 1785 a number of Khadhis and Moollas assembled at Mesnaah, on the Batineh coast, and elected his brother, Kais bin Ahmed, as Imam. Notwithstanding his election, Kais could claim but few partisans and looked round him

for further support. In hopes of obtaining the aid and co-operation of Mohammed bin Suliman, Kais moved up without delay to Nakhl, but found to his disappointment that Mohammed was averse to joining in the enterprise against the Imam Saeed, and the revolt consequently collapsed.

Soon after this event the Imam Saeed was induced to interfere in a serious quarrel that had taken place among the people of Zikki, who were then, as they are now, divided into two hostile camps. Each faction occupied a separate Hujrah or walled town. In this contest the Ghafiris were utterly defeated by the Imam and the Hinawas, who were able to impose their own terms. On January 1st, 1787, an Arab ship cast anchor at Muscat, having on board Captain Francklin and several other English officers on their way to Persia. One of these, Captain Middleton, of the Madras army, died here, and at his funeral a salute of nine guns was fired by the vessels lying in the harbour, viz., an English snow and a Dutch ship, commanded by Captain Stewart.

Captain Francklin gives a good description of the town and remarks that it has a considerable trade with other countries, but that the Arab government would not permit any European factory to be established here. Although the efforts of Kais to supplant his brother Saeed had proved a failure it was manifest that the Imam was unfit to rule alone, and that the main work of the administration must devolve on others.

Hamed, the eldest son of Saeed, was the one who naturally came forward to undertake this task, and being unable to induce the Imam to abdicate, began during the year 1786 to have recourse to intrigue. By a series of crafty and unscrupulous devices, the particulars of which are given in Salil bin Rizak's pages, Hamed obtained possession first of the town and fortress of Muscat from Mohammed bin Khalfan, and subsequently the deliverance to him of the fortresses of Oman, one after another.

Within three years the Imam's temporal power in the state had slipped completely from his grasp and became centred in the hands of his son, who fixed his residence at Muscat and henceforth, as

Regent, carried on the administration with ability and firmness. At this time the Joasmees were very active in the Gulf, being at war with the Attoobees, who had recently taken the Island of Bahrain from the Persians. Shaikh Sakar's efforts, however, to recover the island, in co-operation with the Persians, were ineffectual. In 1787 the Joasmees were again at war with the Imam, and Hamed moved towards the Shemal, by land and sea, with a large force, the fleet being commanded by Mohammed bin Khalfan. In this expedition Hamed was so far successful that he retook Khor Fakan, Jezirat al-Hamra, and laid siege to Rams. He then appears to have returned home, leaving the fleet to operate against Julfar. It is worthy of note here that three years later (1790) occurred the first capture of an English vessel by the Joasmees—this ship was the *Beglerbeg*, bound from Bengal to Bushire, which was taken off Mussendom, where she remained on the rocks for many years.

We must now return to Sultan bin Ahmed who, after an exile of five or six years at Gwader, thought he might prudently venture to return to Oman under the leaders of the Ghafiri faction, with whom he had probably been in communication. Though Sultan's tribe, the Al-Bu Saeedi, was the Yemen or Hinawi faction, Sultan himself always mainly relied upon, and had been supported by, the Nizar or Ghafiri faction, his mother being a relation of Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the Ghafiris.

On landing in Oman Sultan bin Ahmed probably took up his old residence at Naaman, near Burka, and gathered near him a sufficient following to protect himself from the enmity of Hamed, who was still as rancorous towards him as ever. As soon as Sultan had ascertained the exact condition of affairs in the country he arranged with the Beni Jabir and other Ghafiri tribes in the Semail Valley to attack the fortress there and wrest it, if possible, from the hands of Hamed, in whose possession it then was. Hamed quickly collected a force and marched to Semail, but finding his uncle in an excellent position and at the head of a force equal to his own, contented himself with watching his enemy, and no collision took

place. Hamed then allowed his troops to disperse and proceeded to Rostak, to see his father, while Sultan took the opportunity to push down to the coast and plunder Muttrah. The loot was carried to Darseyt, whither Sultan was pursued by Suliman bin Khalfan, now Wali of Muscat, but the attempt to recover the booty was in vain. No further desperate passage of arms arose between Hamed and Sultan, and shortly after a reconciliation was arranged, which was stedfastly and faithfully observed on each side.

Hamed seems to have been a man of remarkable character with a mind equally bold and subtle, and whose head was ever full of ambitious and aggressive schemes. One of his mischievous plans was to raid the Island of Bombay, by letting loose some thousands of wild Arabs on the native town and bazaars; this enterprise, if carried out, might have led to curious results, but fortunately it never went beyond Hamed's brain. Another scheme was to try and recover Mombasa from the Portuguese, but this campaign was reserved for Sultan. It appears certain that in 1791–2 Hamed's mind was busily engaged in working out the plan of a military expedition, and he was preparing ships and transports, as well as collecting men from the tribes, when his career was terminated by death; he died at Muscat of small-pox in 1792.

The unexpected death of Hamed changed the whole aspect of affairs and roused the Imam Saeed from his lethargy. Though content to leave power in the hands of his son he had never tolerated the idea of giving way to his brothers and now that the burden of rule had again fallen on his shoulders, felt compelled to resume charge of the administration. Sultan, however, who had been impatiently watching events, now felt that the tide had turned in his favour, and determined to seize the opportunity offered by the death of Hamed, to obtain his long-cherished object and desire.

Calling on his relative, Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, and other friends and adherents to support him, he set out for Muscat, of which he soon became master almost without resistance. Feeling strong in his influence and prestige, and commanding the undivided support of the Nizariyeh or Ghafiri faction, Sultan was now confident

of success and spared no efforts in preparing to meet his brothers and rivals, the Imam Saeed and Kais, in the field. The vigour and promptitude of Sultan had excited the jealousy and fears of his brothers who now made common cause, and uniting their forces marched from Rostak and Sohar upon Muscat. But the way was barred by the Ghafiri tribes, and a contest took place, which lasted for some months, without any decisive action taking place. By the end of the year the threatened upheaval of the country by a contest for the succession was averted. Kais, despairing of success, retired from the struggle, and at a conference of delegates assembled at Burka, it was arranged that the Imam Saeed should remain at Rostak as the religious head of the nation, that Kais should retain Sohar as his appanage, that Sultan should have Muscat, Burka, Mesnaah, with the entire control of political affairs, and that Mohammed bin Ahmed should keep Sowaik. This compact, which was not unsatisfactory to the people generally, was accepted by all parties and peace was then restored throughout Oman.

Sultan was born about 1755, probably at Rostak, and in his childhood was sent to Adam, where he passed the years of his youth among the Bedouins in the neighbourhood. He is said to have been tall and of a noble presence, undaunted in courage and of sound judgment, not inferior in any way to his father, of whom he was a worthy successor.

Taught by experience during the Persian invasion the high value of Muscat, the statesmen of Oman had by this time perceived that its unrivalled position as a port and as a natural fortress against external and internal foes made it a far more suitable capital than Rostak, Nezwa, or Sohar, and Sultan, following the example of Hamed, lost no time in establishing the seat of government in that city. As a residence he fixed upon the gareza, or cathedral, a large Portuguese building, and here he dwelt for about seven years, when the present palace and seraglio were built.

One of Sultan's first acts after coming to power was to despatch a trusted relative with a suitable force to Gwader to occupy that place on his behalf and to build a fort. The officer was Saif bin Ali, who,

in accordance with further instructions, subsequently surprised and took possession of the village of Charbar, about 100 miles to the west of Gwader.

With his ambition fed by this success, Sultan next sent an expedition against the Beni Naeem of Kishm and Hormuz, who had given him much provocation. This enterprise he commanded in person and with such skill that his conquest of the islands was complete. At this time, and for some years previous, the Shaikh of the Naeem was the Governor of Bundar Abbas and its dependencies, the revenues he had farmed from the Persian Government for a fixed yearly rental. The result of the war was thus doubly advantageous to Seyyid Sultan, for he now assumed the position of the Shaikh, as regards his relations with the Persian Government, and after some negotiation obtained a firman in his own name from the Shah, by virtue of which, on a yearly rental of 6,000 tomans, Bundar Abbas remained a dependency of Muscat for three-quarters of a century. As Persia and Oman were at this time (1794) on bad terms, Seyyid Sultan had, no doubt, to submit to pay heavily for this concession. Soon after Sultan's return from this expedition a quarrel arose between Kais bin Ahmed and some of the Shemal tribes, such as the Beni Yas, Kattab, and Naeem, who moved up to threaten Sohar. Kais being unprepared to meet them, implored Sultan's aid in this emergency, and Sultan having rapidly concentrated a force, joined Kais and marched against the enemy. A heavy fight took place at Dibba, on the same field as the famous battle of A.H. 11 [A.D. 632], and the victory remained with Kais and Sultan, the Naeem being utterly routed and dispersed.

For some years tranquillity prevailed, not only throughout Oman but in the Persian Gulf. Hitherto the rulers of Oman had observed neutrality and had not materially interfered in Gulf affairs, but in 1796 a rupture occurred with Persia, where the vigorous hand of the founder of the new Kajar Dynasty, Agha Mohammed Khan, was being felt in every part. The Shaikh of Bushire now received orders to embark a military force at Mohammerah for an attack on Muscat, but the order appears to have been disregarded owing to want of means.

On May 18th, 1797, the *Bassein* snow, commanded by Captain Torin, bound for Busra with despatches, was attacked off Kishm by twenty-two pirate dhows and carried by boarding. After being plundered and detained for two days she was released and allowed to continue her voyage.

About six months later, in October, a most flagrant case of treachery and unprovoked hostility was committed by the Joasmees against an English cruiser. The *Viper*, of 10 guns, was anchored in Bushire harbour, where there was a fleet of Joasmee dhows lying in wait to intercept some Sooree boats coming from Busra. The Joasmee chief, Shaikh Salih, called on the Resident, and after many protestations of friendship asked for a supply of powder and shot. With incredible weakness the Resident consented and gave the order to the *Viper* to furnish it accordingly. The Joasmees had no sooner received the powder than they opened fire on the *Viper* and attempted to board her. The officer in command, Captain Carruthers, was struck down by a bullet in the head, but the midshipman, Mr. Salter, continued to fight and eventually repulsed the assailants, chasing them out of sight. But the loss of the *Viper* with thirty-two killed and wounded out of a total of sixty-five, shows how severe the action had been and how narrowly she had escaped capture. Still more incredible is the fact that no notice of this treachery was taken, no inquiry made, and no punishment on the Arabs was inflicted by the Government of Bombay. The Resident of Busra, Mr. Manisty, however, sent a strong remonstrance to Shaikh Sakar, but received merely an evasive reply and disavowal of Shaikh Salih's action.

It appears to have been in the year 1797 that Saood, the Amir of Nejd, who had embraced Wahabeism and had overrun and converted the greater part of Arabia by the sword, began to encroach on the northern coast of Oman and endeavoured to subdue the warlike seafaring tribes there, namely, the Beni Yas, Kattab, and Joasmees. The tribes, however, resisted valiantly, and for three years the contest was stubbornly maintained, but in 1800 the Joasmees succumbed and accepted the Wahabee doctrines.

During the greater part of 1798 Sultan was busily engaged in

directing the internal affairs in Oman, but in the month of December he sailed with an expedition against Busra to enforce his claims upon the Pasha of Baghdad for arrears of subsidy. With the view of preserving his territory from insult during his absence from Oman, he made a truce with Shaikh Sakar, the Joasmee, who, being now engaged with the Wahabees, was only too glad to be relieved from hostilities with the ruler of Oman. The Pasha heard of the advance of the Muscat expedition with apprehension, as he had no ships at his disposal capable of contending with the Arab fleet. He therefore solicited from Mr. Manisty, the Resident, the assistance of two English cruisers in protecting his town from attack, promising in return certain advantages in the way of trade. The Indian Government, however, was at this time not in a position to forsake its attitude of neutrality or to make enemies of any Gulf factions, and the Resident was instructed to refrain from doing more than offering good offices in bringing about an amicable settlement. Mr. Manisty accordingly mediated between the Mutasalim of Busra and the Arab leader of the Muscat fleet, which was then lying at Bushire, and effected a complete reconciliation. Perhaps the most important act which Sultan had to do at this period was to make his choice between the two great European powers then contending for the mastery in India—France and England.

Up to this time French influence had been predominant at Muscat and since his usurpation Sultan appears to have acted in some degree under the advice of his French physician. The prestige of France, however, declined in the East during the French Revolution, until the middle of the year 1798, when the sudden appearance of a French army in Egypt, and the brilliant conquest of that country by the young general in command, riveted the eyes of all nations on his surprising achievements. In his dreams of Eastern glory one of Bonaparte's plans was to march across the Syrian desert, then through Mesopotamia and Persia, to the frontiers of India, and to conquer that Empire for France or for himself. It was in pursuance of this project which he continued to cherish for years afterwards, that he despatched emissaries and letters to various Oriental potentates, among whom

were Tippoo Sahib and the Imam of Muscat, with a view to gain allies and assistance in the enterprise.

Twelve days before he started from Cairo on his Syrian expedition he wrote the following letters to the Imam of Muscat and Tippoo Sahib. The letter to Tippoo was the favourable answer to his repeated requests to the French Government for aid against the English, which the misguided Tippoo had been for so many years expecting. But it came too late; the opportunity had been lost. Tippoo was now at the end of his career, and the letters, instead of reaching their intended recipients, were intercepted by Captain S. Wilson, the British Agent at Mocha, who transmitted them to India.

"Cairo, 25th January, 1799.

"To the Imam of Muscat,

"I write you this letter to inform you of the arrival of the French army in Egypt. As you have always been friendly you must be convinced of our desire to protect all the merchant vessels you may send to Suez. I also beg you will forward the enclosed letter to Tippoo Sahib by the first opportunity.

"(Signed) BONAPARTE."

"Cairo, 25th January, 1799.

"To Tippoo Sahib,

"You have already been informed of my arrival on the shores of the Red Sea, with a numerous and invincible army, animated with the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England. I hasten to inform you of my desire to receive news with regard to the political position in which you find yourself placed. I even desire you will send to Suez some competent person who enjoys your confidence, and with whom I can confer.

"(Signed) BONAPARTE."

In the meantime the alarm felt by the Indian Government at the undoubted influence of the French in Oman, the dread lest this would extend over the Gulf, and the apprehension everywhere in-

spired by Bonaparte's military genius and restless activity, led the Governor-General of India, the Marquis of Wellesley, to instruct the newly-appointed Resident at Bushire, Mirza Mehdi Ali Khan, to visit Muscat on his way and to enter into a political engagement with Sultan, having for its object the exclusion of French influence from Oman territory.

Mirza Mehdi reached Muscat in September, 1798, and the treaty which he negotiated was signed on October 12th following. It comprised seven articles and contained, besides the engagement to exclude Frenchmen from the Imam's territory and French ships from his ports, during the prevalence of war between England and France, provision for the establishment by the East India Company of a factory at Bundar Abbas with a guard of 700 or 800 Indian troops. Though it was not mentioned in the treaty, Sultan further made a special request—that an English officer should be sent to reside at Muscat, on behalf of the Company, as his adviser. Sultan was thus the first Prince in the Peninsula of Arabia to enter into political relations with England, and it is satisfactory to note that the friendly relations then initiated have from that day to this continued to strengthen and increase.

During the year 1799 Sultan was engaged in consolidating his power in Oman and in dealing with internal dissensions. Among the tribes that were disaffected towards him were the Daroo of Al-Sharkiya and the Beni Naeem of Al-Dhahireh, both of which he succeeded in subduing, and bringing back to his allegiance. Having at length tranquillized his country, he was able to turn his attention to foreign enemies, and first of all he resolved to concentrate his strength against the Attoobees of Al-Bahrain, who had refused to pay any longer the tax levied upon all vessels passing from India to the Persian Gulf. This sea tax had for one and a-half centuries been paid to Muscat by all craft, foreign as well as home, sailing through the Straits of Mussendom, and as the revenue it used to bring in was considerable, Sultan was not inclined to allow the refusal of the Attoobees to pay the impost to pass without chastisement. He accordingly sailed in the *Gunjava* frigate, with three square

rigged ships and sixty bughlas to attack Al-Bahrain, and in a sea-fight that took place shortly after, captured three of the Attoobee vessels. In the meantime the Attoobees, being aware of their inability to resist the naval power of Oman, had hastened to place themselves under the protection of Persia, by paying the Shah the tribute for Al-Bahrain for the preceding year.

Sultan heard of this action on the part of the Attoobees at the time when he was preparing to land his troops on that island, and he lost no time in entering into negotiations with Persia himself. Being foiled in his attempt on Al-Bahrain, he occupied the Island of Karrack, which he offered to farm from Persia at a yearly rental and pay five years in advance. This offer, however, was declined by the Persians, who continued to take the part of the Attoobees, and Sultan eventually relinquished further operations against the tribe on payment by them of a portion of the arrears of sea-tax due ; of this tax we hear nothing further, and it appears to have been henceforth abandoned.

Not long after the conclusion of the treaty by Mirza Mehdi in 1798 reports reached the Government of India to the effect that, notwithstanding his engagements, Sultan had resumed friendly intercourse with the French, and the interception of General Bonaparte's letter seems to have been looked on as affording proof of this. The immunities in favour of Arab trade that had been granted to Sultan were accordingly suspended for a time, and Captain John Malcolm, who had been selected to conduct a mission to Persia, was instructed to call at Muscat on his way thither, for the purpose of renewing the Anglo-Oman alliance and concluding a second treaty, confirming the provisions of the one of 1798.

Captain Malcolm sailed from Bombay in the *Bombay* frigate, commanded by Captain Selby, and arrived at Muscat on January 8th, 1800. Besides the staff attached to the mission to Persia, Captain Malcolm brought with him Assistant-Surgeon Bogle, of the Bombay establishment, who, in compliance with the request made by Sultan to Mirza Medhi Ali, had been appointed to act as Resident on behalf of the East India Company at Muscat. On anchoring in

the harbour the *Bombay* was visited by the Governor of the town, Saif bin Mohammed, who came to call on Captain Malcolm, and stated that Sultan was absent at the time on an expedition against the Attoobees and that his return was uncertain. Captain Malcolm returned the Governor's visit the following day, and then having landed Dr. Bogle and installed him in his appointment set sail for Hormuz in search of Sultan.

On January 18th Captain Malcolm sighted and boarded the *Gunjava* off the island of Henjam, and having produced his credentials and delivered his presents, proceeded at once to explain the purport of his mission. He told Sultan how much the Indian Government regretted he had leagued himself with the French, pointing out that as all the ports of India from Surat to Calcutta were in the hands of the English, Muscat could, without difficulty, be excluded from all participation in the Indian trade if the British Government were so disposed.

Sultan listened with deep attention; being conscious of his inability to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality in the war he felt the full force of the arguments put before him, and he had no hesitation in making his decision, replying to Captain Malcolm, His Highness assured him that he desired nothing better than to cement an alliance with the English, to the exclusion of their enemies, and he offered to sign then and there the treaty that Captain Malcolm had been empowered to conclude. The treaty thus entered into bears, in fact, the same date, and consists of only two articles, one confirming the convention of 1798 and the second providing for the residence of a Political Agent.

In November, 1800, another engagement took place in Oman waters between French and English cruisers. The *Intrepid* of 10 guns, commanded by Captain Hall, encountered a French privateer of 12 guns off Muscat, and after a long combat succeeded in beating her off and chasing her away; Captain Hall and five men were killed in the action.

It was in this year—1800—that the warlike tribes of Nejd, in Central Arabia, were first seen in Oman. These tribes, impelled

by the fanaticism engendered by the doctrines of a religious reformer, Shaikh Abdul Wahab, after whom they are now called Wahabees, had already overrun and conquered nearly the whole of the rest of the Peninsula, and the Amir Abdul Azeez, eager to expurgate the heresy of Ibadheeism from the land of Oman, was now preparing to turn his arms eastward and spread his views of the true religion by the sword.

After completing the subjugation of the tribes on the pirate coast, the Wahabees pushed on to Al-Beraimi. The leader of this expedition, which consisted of a large camel force and 700 cavalry, was Al-Harik, a bold and skilful general, who immediately began the erection of a fort there, to serve as headquarters or as a base of operations and campaigns against the people of Oman. This invasion of their country by the dreaded Wahabees created intense excitement throughout all Oman, and Sultan, with his usual energy and spirit, hastened to assemble the troops and move up to oppose their advance. He marched through the Wady Jezzi as far as Al-Beraimi, but in the contest which ensued with the enemy Sultan appears to have been unsuccessful in his attack on the fort, and finding that he could not expel the intruders from Al-Jow made a truce with Al-Harik and retired to Sohar, where he dismissed his troops.

In 1801 the island of Al-Bahrain, which has ever been, on account of its rich pearl-fishery, the chief bone of contention for the peoples round the shores of the Persian Gulf, was again the object of Sultan's ambition, and was invaded, this time successfully, by a grand naval expedition from Muscat, the Attoobees being driven out and the island occupied by the Omani troops, and Saif bin Ali, who had already done good service on the Mekran coast, was appointed Governor and Commandant. An attempt was then made by Sultan to capture the town of Kwait, where the Attoobees had taken refuge, and homage was demanded from the Shaikh, but the enterprise was a failure. Nor did Al-Bahrain remain long in the possession of Muscat; a few months later it was retaken from Salim bin Sultan, then a boy of twelve, who had replaced Saif bin Ali, by the Attoobees, who succeeded in surprising the garrison. In this year Assistant-

Surgeon Bogle was succeeded by Captain David Seton, of the Bombay Army, who was appointed to act under the title of Resident at Muscat, and who assumed charge of his duties towards the close of the year.

The expulsion from Al-Bahrain was a disappointment to Sultan, whose ardour for military enterprises appears to have been unquenchable, and who now resolved upon prosecuting the Attoobee war in earnest. Saif bin Ali was again despatched with a strong naval force to the island, which, in part, he succeeded in re-occupying, but though he made good his footing, Saif could not entirely expel the enemy, and Sultan, feeling his strength unequal to their subjugation, supported as they were at this time by the Wahabees, now determined to call in the aid of Persia. With this object he despatched as envoy, one Shaikh Ali, by way of Congoon to the Prince-Governor of Shiraz, with costly presents, to procure the co-operation of that ruler in a great expedition against the Attoobees. Sultan wrote also to Shaikh Nasir, the Wali of Bushire, requesting him to use his influence with the Prince in obtaining the required assistance, and enclosing a blank sheet of paper with his (Sultan's) seal on it, to be filled up with any conditions the Persians might impose in return for the military assistance they were to give. Sultan, however, did not wait for these reinforcements, but early in June, 1802, having determined on conducting operations in person, set sail with a formidable fleet of ships and bughlas for Al-Bahrain. Landing in force, he attacked the Attoobees vigorously, but without gaining much success, until two months later, his appeal to Shiraz having been favourably received, a body of 200 horse and 2,000 foot embarked at Bushire to join him. The result of the combined forces acting against the tribe was that the latter were compelled to submit and acknowledge the supremacy of Oman ; the aggressive attitude of the Wahabees, at this time, and the consequent necessity of withdrawing a large portion of his army for home defence, alone prevented Sultan from prosecuting the war, until he had completely expelled the Attoobees from the island. His navy, however, had the satisfaction of so far destroying the Attoobee war-craft that by the

end of October, 1803, their piratical depredations were entirely at an end.

In May, 1802, Captain Seton was compelled by ill-health to return to Bombay on twelve months' leave, the Company's native broker being left in charge of affairs until Captain Seton returned to Muscat and resumed charge as Resident in June, 1803.

In 1803 the Company's brig *Fly*, 14 guns, commanded by Lieutenant Mainwaring, was attacked off Kais by the *La Fortune*, commanded by the famous privateer, Captain Lememe. The despatches and treasure of the *Fly* were sunk and three of the officers, Mainwaring, Arthurs, and Maitland, were taken to Mauritius. The other officers, having been released, succeeded in recovering the despatches and sailed for Bombay, but were captured on the way by a Joasmee Squadron, which carried them to Julfar. Here they purchased their liberty by giving up the treasure at Kais, and then set out for Bushire, which was reached by two survivors only, Pennel and Jowl, after incredible sufferings and privations, the rest of the party having died on the way. For their great hardships and risks they were unrewarded by the Governor Duncan, who showed great ingratitude and cold-heartedness. The *La Fortune* soon afterwards also took the *Viper*, of 14 guns, belonging to the same service. Lememe then proceeded to the Mauritius, but returned to the Gulf early in 1804, and committed great havoc until November of that year, when he was himself captured by the English frigate *Concorde*, which had been sent out in search of him.

In January, 1803, Seyyid Sultan resolved on performing a pilgrimage to Mecca, and embarked on board one of his frigates with Shaikh Muhenna al-Yaarebi and others, and set sail for Jedda for that purpose, taking with him presents of money and munitions of war for the Shereef; the regency appointed to act during his absence was composed of his elder son, Salim, his relative, Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, and Mohammed Khalfan.

Soon after his departure, his nephew, Bedr bin Saif, who was then residing at Hibra, a village near Nakhl, proceeded to Muscat with a few followers and concealed himself in the house of Majid

bin Khalfan, the brother of the Wali of the town, and endeavoured to seduce the commandant of Fort Jelali from his allegiance. In this intrigue Majid, who was disaffected, lent his aid, but the attempt failed, and Bedr, having been denounced, was barely able to effect his escape. Tradition relates that he was being smuggled into Jelali in a large box, when he was detected by one of the Hindoo traders, who reported the matter to Salim. At all events Bedr got clear off and made his way first to Ajman, from whence he proceeded to Zobara in Katar, and sought protection from the Wahabees, whose tenets he adopted; and with their help he subsequently on two occasions made an attempt on Muscat, but failing in this, he at length determined to make a journey to Nejd, where, in 1804, he had an interview with the Amir Saood, who gladly received him.

Some time previous to Sultan's departure from Muscat he had responded to an appeal made to him by the Shereef of Mecca for aid in repelling the Wahabees, who had invaded the Hejaz and were threatening the Holy Cities. The despatch of this force to the Hejaz was an unfortunate move on the part of Sultan, who had reason too soon to repent his magnanimity. Its numerical strength was not only much too small to be of any real service in checking the Wahabee invasion, but when the news of its arrival at Mecca reached the ears of the Amir Abdul Azeez, he became so exasperated at Sultan's action that after his return from the campaign, he declared war against Muscat, and despatched orders to Al-Bahrain, Kwait, and Ras al-Khyma to fit out their fleets to scour the Gulf against Omani commerce. To these orders the Attoobees and Joasmees demurred, as the pearl-fishery season was now commencing and all their men were engaged, so they represented to the Amir that they could not abandon their occupation, but the commands were repeated in so peremptory a manner that the tribes no longer hesitated to obey and the pearl-fishery that year was abandoned in favour of piracy.

The news of the Amir's intention to extend his aggressions by sea as well as by land induced the Persian Government and the Pasha of Baghdad to ally themselves with Sultan against him.

In the naval war that followed Sultan personally took an active part and did his utmost to protect his own coasts and commerce from the insults and ravages of the piratical fleet, but his success was not great ; his allies had, after some show of assistance, left him in the lurch, and he was now threatened with an invasion by land.

In this critical position Sultan deemed it best to try and propitiate his enemy ; he therefore despatched a mission to Deraya and purchased a truce for three years by the payment of a large sum of money, the promise of a yearly tribute of 12,000 dollars, and the establishment of a Wahabee Agent at Muscat. The Amir, however, had no intention of relinquishing his grasp on Oman even on these humiliating terms. He took advantage of the truce to reinforce Al-Harik at Al-Beraimi, and shortly after perfidiously broke it by ordering his general to march. Al-Harik at once poured down into the Batineh, where he committed unspeakable atrocities and easily overpowered the resistance he met with from the disunited tribes in his path.

Sultan had become apprehensive that the suspension of hostilities on the part of Al-Harik was only temporary, and on hearing of Al-Harik's movement, hastily gathered as large a force as he could muster, and a battle took place in Wady Heimali above Sowaik in which the Omanis were routed by the Wahabees. This was the first great disaster experienced in Oman at the hands of these fanatics, and Sultan was constrained by the alarm felt everywhere to call a council of war at Burka, to discuss a plan of operations. The Shaikhs of both factions assembled there, agreed to combine against the common enemy, and arranged that each tribe should contribute its quota and assemble at Khaboora on a certain day. Al-Harik, after the affair at Heimali, retired towards Sohar, to which he laid siege, and there quietly awaited the advance of the army of defence Sultan was raising, and which soon numbered 12,000 men. At this juncture the news of the death of the Wahabee's Amir, Abdul Azeez, who had been assassinated at Deraya in October, reached Al-Harik at Sohar, and the advice he then received of affairs at home induced

him to raise the siege and retire without delay to Al-Beraimi. Relieved from the presence of their exacting masters the Joasmees speedily made peace with Sultan, and the Omanis, unacquainted with the real cause of the sudden disappearance of their foes, ascribed it to their own superiority in numbers or to the success of the negotiations that had been carried on by Sultan with Al-Harik.

Reverting now to events in Europe, we see that when the death of the Emperor Paul dissolved the treaty for the joint Franco-Russian invasion of India overland, Napoleon determined that the substitution of French supremacy for English in India should follow as a natural consequence upon the subjection of England itself, for which purpose he at once began to make preparations. With this scheme before him, Napoleon, towards the close of the year 1802, while the Treaty of Amiens was yet in force, selected one of his ablest generals, Decaen, to be the Captain-General of the French possessions in the East, and despatched him with Admiral Linoi's expedition, which sailed from Brest on March 6th, 1803.

The mission of General Decaen was to observe closely the position of the English in India in their relation to the native Princes, and to prepare the way for the French conquest and occupation of India, in procuring full information as to the state of affairs and extent of armament required. After visiting Pondicherry, General Decaen fixed upon the Island of Mauritius as his headquarters and post of observation, and on establishing himself there immediately despatched M. de Cavaignac in the *Atalanta* frigate to his destination. This M. de Cavaignac had been appointed by Napoleon Agent and Consul for France at Muscat, and as his mission had the same object in view as that of General Decaen, to whom he was subordinate, it may be as well to transcribe here the concluding paragraph of the long letter on instructions written for the General's guidance by Napoleon, which indicates clearly enough that the scheme for the conquest of India had not been relinquished, and that Decaen might possibly be entrusted with the enterprise :—

" The mission of the Captain-General is, in the first instance,

a mission of observation, political and military, but the first Consul well informed by the Captain-General—upon whom he relies for the punctual execution of these instructions—may perhaps place it in his power to acquire a great glory which prolongs the memory of men beyond the duration of ages."

The *Atalanta* frigate, a famous ship in her day, was painted a bright yellow colour with white mouldings, and was one of the swiftest and handsomest vessels of her class in the French navy. She sailed from Mauritius on September 5th, 1803, and reached Muscat on October 3rd. On anchoring in the cove she was boarded by the Wali, who, on being made acquainted with the purport of M. de Cavaignac's mission, informed that gentleman that Sultan was absent in the interior, being engaged in operations against the Wahabees; he promised, however, that immediate intimation should be sent to him of the *Atalanta's* arrival, and in the meantime offered M. de Cavaignac the hospitality of a house on shore. At this time the Resident, Captain Seton, was absent on duty, having sailed in the *Ternate* in the beginning of September for another part of the Gulf, and the French envoy therefore had a fair opportunity of making friends with the leading Arabs, and of pressing the advantages of a French alliance. It was in his favour, also, that the commercial intercourse so long existing with Mauritius had caused the formation of a strong French party in the town, as he was able to depend on the influence of these partisans at the palace, and it was from them that he first learned of the existence of the treaties of 1798 and 1800.

Congratulating himself, therefore, on the opportune absence of his adversary, the English Resident, M. de Cavaignac entertained for some days high hopes of procuring a favourable reception and of succeeding in his mission. Sultan returned to Muscat on the morning of October 12th, 1803. He had been engaged in contending and negotiating with the Wahabee General, but on receiving his Wali's letter, had started at once for Muscat, firmly resolved on the course he would adopt with Napoleon's Agent.

The captain of the *Atalanta*, on hearing of Sultan's arrival,

sent two of his officers to convey his respects and compliments, and to ask for an interview. The officers were civilly received, and on being questioned as to the object of the *Atalanta's* visit, replied that it was desired to establish a French Residency at Muscat, and that an officer appointed to act as Consul by the French Government was on board the vessel. The same afternoon Sultan sent two Arab officials on board with instructions to acquaint the Captain and M. de Cavaignac that His Highness could not receive a French Agent and Consul on account of the engagements recently entered into with the English, and that he declined an interview to discuss the subject, but that, as he wished to remain on friendly terms with the French, his harbours would always be open, as before, to their vessels, and that he would be happy to listen to any proposals they had to make on commercial matters. In dictating this diplomatic message, Sultan was, no doubt, actuated by a keen regard for his country's interests. While fearful of offending the French, the remembrance of Captain Malcolm's arguments and the momentous events that had occurred since his (Malcolm's) visit, such as the evacuation of Egypt by the French army and the triumphs of Lord Lake in India, had created a deep impression on the Prince's mind, and must have convinced him more than ever as to the incomparably greater importance to the Arabs of the English over the French alliance. The tone of the message must have shown M. de Cavaignac the hopelessness of argument and representation on his part, as he does not appear to have again sought an interview, but it was a bitter disappointment to him, for his Arab friends had made him sanguine of success, and he had, doubtless, been anticipating in his mind the approbation of Napoleon. Reluctant, however, to abandon so easily the mission with which he had been charged, he waited in the harbour for one more day, and then, under cover of the darkness of midnight on the 13th, the *Atalanta's* broad sails bore her out of the port, and by the morning she was nowhere to be seen. This attempt closed for the time French political intercourse with Muscat, and it was not renewed until Saeed sent a mission to the Isle of France after the murder of Bedr in 1807. But the French privateers, nevertheless, did not cease to make

Muscat a rendezvous and base for their operations against British shipping in the Persian and Oman Gulfs, and great was the depredation committed by them.

During the ten years of Sultan's reign, from 1793 to 1804, the loss inflicted on British trade in the Indian Ocean was not less than 250 lakhs of rupees, or about three millions sterling. Sultan and the Muscat merchants had agents at Port Louis specially to purchase English goods and prizes, and many were the ships thus brought to the Gulf or taken to Calcutta for re-sale, for it was not until 1806 that the Marine Insurance Offices in India interfered to check this traffic.

With regard to the proposed alliance between the Pasha and Seyyid Sultan, it does not appear that Sultan's mission to Baghdad resulted in any joint action with the Turks. The Pasha was profuse in his promises of assistance and co-operation, but though equally desirous to see the Wahabees crushed, he preferred to wait and see the Omani Prince exhaust himself in opposing them. Sultan's appeals to the Government of India were similarly unsuccessful; he was left to bear the brunt of the war alone.

Under a weak ruler, Oman would almost certainly have succumbed to the invader, but Sultan never relaxed his efforts nor spared his resources in the defence of his country, and his indomitable courage and activity infused a spirit of resistance into his countrymen that enabled them for years to keep their foes in check. Until his untimely death in the following year, Sultan seems to have been engaged in an almost continual struggle with Saood's troops, and though he was able to prevent their advance up to the capital, he could never dislodge them from their main post at Al-Beraimi nor expel them from the country.

It was in September, 1804, that he left Oman, for the last time, on a naval expedition in the Gulf. He then sailed for the second time to Busra, where he wished to ascertain the extent of the military preparations being made by the Turkish Pasha, in accordance with his promise for operating against the Wahabees. Disappointed and indignant, however, at his reception there, he did not remain long, but turned his face homeward and set sail down the Gulf.

On his way he transferred himself to an Arab boat or bateel, in order to land at Bassidore, and while in this almost defenceless position was attacked by three piratical dhows belonging to Ras al-Khyma, before any of his fleet could discern his danger or come to his assistance. His assailants were Joasmees, at this time in league with the Wahabees, and, as usual, at war with Muscat, but that they attacked with the set purpose of taking the life of the Omani chief is more than doubtful. Sultan fell at the first onslaught, with several of his attendants ; and the pirates, on finding what they had done, fled at once to escape the vengeance of the Muscat fleet. The various dates mentioned for this event are November 14th, 17th, 18th, and 20th, 1804, but the exact date is not of importance. He is said to have been buried at Lingah.

The news of Sultan's death caused, as may be imagined, intense dismay throughout Oman. Threatened as the country was by external foes the people seemed to be stunned by the loss of their great leader, and for some little time the attitude of all parties was one of expectation. Sultan's death, however, affected not only his own country, it created a great alteration in the state of politics over the whole Gulf. The general consternation at the disappearance of the warrior, who had alone actively opposed the common foe and disturber of public peace, caused every chief to defend himself, not knowing his friends from his enemies, while the Joasmees and Attoobees, being no longer held in check, became more audacious than ever.

Within a month the pirates, whose fleet at this time was very large, captured two English brigs belonging to Mr. Manisty, the Resident at Busra, viz., the *Shannon,* commanded by Captain Babcock, and the *Trimmer,* commanded by Captain Cummings, and carried them into Julfar, the Persian name of which about this period was changed to Ras al-Khyma. Part of the crews were put to the sword, and Captains Babcock and Cummings, after being cruelly treated and mutilated, were released. This outrage was followed up a few days later by an attack on the *Mornington,* a cruiser of 24 guns, by a fleet of forty dhows, which were, however, driven off by a sharp cannonade.

When starting on the expedition to Busra, in which he lost his life, Sultan had appointed Mohammed bin Nasir bin Mohammed al-Jabry guardian of his two sons, Salim and Saeed, as well as Regent for the conduct of affairs on their behalf.

Mohammed's first impulse was to send Sultan's younger son, Saeed, with four ships and a number of dhows to the Island of Kishm to attack the Joasmees and avenge his father's death, while a considerable force would proceed to Julfar for the same purpose, but rumours of impending troubles at home prevented the realization of this project.

Kais bin Ahmed, who, as we have seen, had been given the appanage of Sohar by his father, deeming it a fit opportunity for securing the Government for himself, lost no time in collecting the tribes under his influence, and in conjunction with his brother Mohammed marched along the Batineh coast early in 1805 to Muttrah, of which he took possession without difficulty.

In the meanwhile Mohammed bin Nasir, who had summoned some of the Ghafiri tribes to his aid, stood on the defensive, but finding he was unable to retain Muscat against Kais, who daily gathered strength, sued for terms and offered to relinquish Khaboora to Kais and grant him a month's allowance of 2,000 dollars if he would retire. Kais, however, feeling confident of success, refused the terms and continued the siege of Muscat.

After taking council with Sultan's sister Moza and other adherents, Mohammed bin Nasir determined to call in the aid of Bedr bin Saif, who was then absent in Nejd. Bedr appears to have inherited his father's stern and ambitious character, and no sooner had he reached manhood than he began to intrigue against his uncle.

— In 1803 while Sultan was absent on pilgrimage, Bedr entered Muscat in disguise and endeavoured by stratagem to get possession of Fort Jelali (as already narrated). He had subsequently proceeded to Al-Deraya, the Wahabee capital, to solicit aid from the Amir in his enterprise against Sultan, and he was returning to Oman with promise of support when he heard of his uncle's death, and at the

same time received Mohammed Nasir's invitation to join him at Muscat. The invitation fell in so harmoniously with Bedr's plans that he did not hesitate for a moment, and feeling sure that he could soon get the ascendancy over his cousins, set out at once for Julfar, from whence he proceeded to Muscat. He arrived at a critical time; Mohammed Nasir and Sultan's sons were on the point of surrendering when Bedr came to their aid and reversed the situation. He had no sooner learned the position of affairs than he applied for help to his friends the Wahabees, who, in accordance doubtless with instructions from the Amir, were ready and eager to support him, and who immediately dispatched a force to threaten Kais's capital—Sohar—and thus create a diversion. The plan succeeded; Kais agreed to raise the siege of Muscat on condition of receiving Khaboora, with part of the Batineh, and then hastened home to repel the Wahabees.

A month later Kais found a pretext for renewing hostilities and marched on Muttrah, which he again captured. The approach of large Wahabee reinforcements by sea, said to consist of fifteen dhows and 4,000 men, put an end to the contest, and again compelled Kais to withdraw.

But the Amir Saood, in making this demonstration in favour of Bedr, had no intention of giving his protégé too great an ascendancy. His object was rather to let the two rivals, Bedr and Kais, exhaust their strength in contending with each other, until he could find leisure to establish his own despotism. The Wahabee force, therefore, sailed away again, apparently without landing, and Bedr made peace with Kais on the understanding that Kais should receive Muttrah in addition to his other acquisitions and a subsidy of 1,000 dollars a month.

The Joasmees at this time were very active at sea, and it is recorded that the Company's cruiser *Queen* was attacked, on April 30th, by a very large bughla near Muscat on her way up the Gulf. The bughla had ten guns and was strongly manned, but after a severe struggle was beaten off.

The Resident at Muscat, Captain David Seton, was actively engaged at this time in prosecuting measures in conjunction with

the Muscat Government against the Joasmee pirates for the outrage committed by them in taking the *Shannon* and *Trimmer*. Having sailed to the Island of Kishm in the *Mornington*, he blockaded the Joasmee fleet, until, by the combined operations, the pirates were reduced to seek for peace, and a truce was granted by Captain Seton until he could refer to the Bombay Government on the question of terms. From Kishm Captain Seton appears to have sailed in company with the *Minerva*, early in June, to Bundar Abbas, where he was joined by Bedr bin Saif with the Muscat fleet.

On the death of Sultan advantage had been taken of the general confusion resulting therefrom, by Moolla Hoossain al-Maeeni, Shaikh of Kishm, to assault and capture Bundar Abbas, which had been leased to the Oman Government some years previously.

In this affair, in which the English ships gave moral support to the allies, but did not fire on the fort, the exertions of the Muscat Arabs were successful in driving out a Kishm garrison and in re-establishing their authority. In return for the support thus afforded, Captain Seton obtained from Bedr bin Saif permission to erect a factory and other concessions.

Bedr bin Saif's return to Muscat in July was hastened, apparently, by the news that his uncle Kais, having broken his engagement, had, in coalition with the Joasmees and Moolla Hoossain of Kishm, left Sohar to attack the capital. By the time Bedr had arrived at Muscat, Kais had already been able to raid the environs unopposed and was preparing to besiege the town. Bedr at once renewed his appeal to the Wahabees to threaten Sohar, while the young Saeed bin Sultan attacked and recovered Bidbid and Fanja in the Semail Valley. The result of the campaign was disastrous to Kais's hopes. He found that he had miscalculated his strength and had no alternative but to purchase peace, by surrendering Muttrah and his subsidy of 2,000 dollars. On the other hand, Bedr had, by his frequent recourse to the Wahabees for military aid against his rival, shown how dependent he was on them for maintaining his position, and how much he had fallen under their influence and tutelage.

The people of Oman beheld with dismay the humiliating and

increasing submission of Bedr to the dictates of the Wahabee Agent at Muscat, and contrasted his conduct with the patriotic loyalty of their late ruler, Sultan bin Ahmed, who had always done his utmost to check Wahabee pretensions and aggressions, and had not been unsuccessful. In addition to payment of tribute and the maintenance of 400 Wahabee cavalry at Burka to overawe the country, the observance by all ranks of Abdul Wahab's doctrines, with regular attendance at prayers, were strictly enforced, while the minarets of the Ibadhi and Sunni mosques were everywhere broken down and removed.

In this state of affairs the discontent and indignation of the Omanis became daily more widespread and intense, and Bedr, who was looked on as the chief cause of their prostration under the hated invader, became very unpopular.

On July 11th, Captain Skinner arrived at Muscat to take command of the ships in the Gulf to act against the Joasmee pirates. At the end of August, 1805, the French ship *Belle Poule*, of 42 guns and 320 men, a long, low corvette with rakish masts, captured the English ship *Endeavour*, commanded by Captain Robson, and brought her to Muscat; she afterwards proceeded up the Gulf to Busra.

In October, 1805, Moolla Hoossain deputed an Agent to Muscat on behalf of the Joasmees, to continue the negotiations for a peace with the English, which had been commenced at Kishm in June. Captain Seton found that the Joasmees were now more desirous than ever to relinquish pirating English vessels, and he again submitted proposals to the Bombay Government, which in reply insisted that the treaty should include the whole Gulf, and that full indemnification should be given for all losses. These terms were found quite impracticable by Captain Seton without having recourse to hostilities, but eventually a treaty was entered into with Sultan bin Sakar on February 6th, 1806, by which the Joasmees agreed not to molest English ships in future, and to give three months' notice in the event of their being coerced by the Wahabees into doing so. On the other side, the Joasmees were to be allowed to trade with English ports from Surat to Bengal.

In the same year (1806) the Joasmees co-operated with Bedr bin Saif in an attack on his uncle Kais at Sohar, and a desultory war followed without much result, as the same year we find Bedr and the Joasmees again at variance, Bedr having sent a secret expedition to Kishm, seized Moolla Hoossain by surprise and brought him to Muscat, where he was held to ransom. In 1807 he was sent back by Mohammed bin Nasir, on his agreeing to hand over Hormuz and Kishm, but in the meantime the Wahabees, exasperated at the news of Bedr's assassination, and eager to strike a blow at the Government at Muscat, threw a force into Kishm, and when the Muscat ships arrived with Moolla Hoossain on board, refused to receive him or to allow the island to be restored. Not content with thwarting Mohammed Nasir at Kishm, the Wahabees despatched a Joasmee fleet of 22 dhows and other vessels to Soor to surprise the fort there, but met with so spirited a resistance on the part of the Jenebeh and Beni Bu Ali, that the attack failed and the Joasmees were driven off with heavy loss.

Reverting to the year 1806, we find that Bedr bin Saif had begun to undermine the rights and claims of his cousins, Salim and Saeed, by excluding them from any share in the government of Muscat. With this view, he had sent Salim as Wali to Mesnaah, and Saeed to Burka, to be out of the way. His designs in all probability were not penetrated by Salim, who seems to have accepted his position contentedly enough, but the more subtle and ambitious Saeed grasped the meaning of his treatment and awaited his opportunity.

At length in 1807, prompted by these feelings of resentment and urged on, doubtless, by his associates, Saeed resolved to make an effort to recover possession of Muscat and to rid himself and country of one who was now a rival and an enemy. To oppose his cousin in the field, however, was out of the question ; it offered no prospect of success, and no alternative appeared to remain but assassination. Mohammed bin Nasir al-Jabry was the person to whom Saeed naturally turned for aid in the affair, and it was proposed that Mohammed should proceed to Muscat and dispose of Bedr as best he could. Mohammed, however, was fearful of incurring the vengeance

of the Al-Bu Saeedis, and declined the enterprise, but he did not refuse to assist in arranging the plot that led to the tragedy of Bedr's death.

There are four or five versions of this transaction, but it seems clear that Bedr was enticed to Burka and was attacked by Saeed during an interview at Naaman, a village about four miles distant. Supported by Mohammed Nasir and his guard, Saeed stabbed Bedr, who defended himself bravely and managed to escape from the house and fled towards the Wahabee lines, but was overtaken and slain.

The Wahabee force at Burka was indignant at the murder and demanded the punishment of the offenders, and Saeed was mean and ungrateful enough to throw the blame on Mohammed Nasir. The Wahabees, however, were in danger of being attacked by the excited people and deemed it prudent to quit the country and retire to Beraimi. Saeed immediately set sail for Muscat, sending word of the occurrence to his brother Salim, who had remained quietly at Mesnaah and had not been concerned in the crime. This event, which occurred in March, 1807, was the turning point in Saeed's career, and placed him at once above all competitors. The deed, so far from being reckoned a crime and reprobated, was applauded throughout Oman ; Saeed was recognized and acknowledged on all sides as gifted with true Arab courage and instincts, and as one well fitted to hold the reins of power. He was hailed as the deliverer of his country from the hand of one who had turned renegade and had been in league with their invaders. Among the first to approve the deed and acknowledge Saeed's fitness to govern was Kais, who hence-forward admitted his supremacy. Saeed was soon joined by Salim, and it was agreed that the two brothers should rule conjointly—an arrangement that was carried out with fraternal affection and without rivalry until Salim's death.

Salim was now eighteen, having been born in 1789 ; he was of a mild and studious disposition and had little energy, but was not wanting in courage and capacity. Saeed was a year younger ; his mother was Ghanee, a daughter of Khalfan bin Mohammed al-Wakeel

al-Bu Saeedi, and besides his having thus a better title by descent than Salim, whose mother was of a different tribe, his high spirits and energetic character indicated him as more peculiarly fitted to take the lead. This he did from the first, as we shall see, and he must be looked on hereafter as the ruling spirit in the government.

The first act of Saeed, who dreaded the vengeance of the Wahabees for the murder of their ally, Seyyid Bedr, was to write to the Amir Saood and exculpate himself from the suspicions that attached to him. He accused Mohammed Nasir of the crime, declared him a rebel, and requested the Wahabees' aid in attacking him. Saeed promised to fulfil all the engagements entered into by Seyyid Bedr as to tribute, etc., to receive again the Wahabee guard of 400 men at Burka, and to observe the Wahabee tenets. This letter, which was accompanied with handsome presents, was despatched by a special messenger. The Amir Saood was not deceived by Saeed's words; he had been fully apprised by his agents at Muscat of the particulars of the transaction, and of the part that Saeed had played in it. Saood, however, to conceal his intentions, wrote a pacific reply, apparently accepting Saeed's excuses and deprecating action against Mohammed Nasir.

The dynastic change and the conduct of Saeed appear to have been viewed with disfavour by the British authorities, and Saeed began to dread lest he should be left alone in the encounter, which he knew was to come with the Wahabees. Saeed, who had been impressed by the Napoleonic wars and successes in Europe, was thus led to turn his attention to the renewal of political relations with the French, which had been relinquished by Sultan, at the request of the British Government.

Since the futile mission of M. Cavaignac in the *Atalanta* frigate in 1803, the only intercourse had been the occasional purchase by Sultan and Bedr of English prizes, captured and sold at Mauritius by the French. Saeed, determined on seeking French alliance, now despatched Majid bin Khalfan as envoy on a mission to that island to renew the relations which had formerly existed. This mission resulted in a treaty being concluded between Saeed and General

Decaen, on June 15th, 1807. French influence was now in the ascendant at Muscat for a brief period. In July, 1808, a fresh treaty with the French was concluded, the first one not having been found satisfactory, and M. Dallons was sent to Muscat as Consular Agent.

By this time the audacity and power of the piratical Joasmees had increased to such an extent that they had become as great a scourge to Oman by sea as the Wahabees were by land, and the trade of Muscat was seriously interrupted. With the object of checking them in some degree, Saeed, in concert with his uncle Kais, undertook an expedition against Khor Fakan, where the Joasmees had formed a piratical station.

In May, 1808, Saeed sailed with a flotilla for that fort, where he was joined by Kais, and after a sharp conflict the fort was carried by assault and the garrison put to the sword. News of Saeed's proceedings, however, had been rapidly carried to Ras al-Khyma, which is about twenty miles distant, and Shaikh Sultan hastened to the relief of the place, where he arrived after the massacre of the garrison. He had but a small force with him, yet he easily vanquished Saeed's troops and compelled them to fly, and Kais was killed in the fight.

The troubles of Saeed were now gathering thick upon him, young and inexperienced as he was, for he was now only in his nineteenth year; he would have succumbed before the prospect of carrying on the struggle with such formidable enemies as now surrounded him had he not been sustained by an indomitable spirit of self-reliance.

The Wahabees had now arrived at the zenith of their power; the Amir Saood had determined upon completing the conquest of Oman and had announced his intention of personally leading an army to Muscat, while the system employed hitherto by him in Oman was one of terrorism. He maintained a Political Agent at Muscat and a strong garrison at Beraimi, the frontier town towards Nejd, and it was from this point that his expedition started when hostilities arose in Oman. These excursions were invariably attended by ruthless massacres and barbarities, and the dread they inspired was sufficient

usually to keep the whole country in a state of abject prostration. In this plight the cup of humiliation for the Omanis was, therefore, nearly full, but they were now threatened with yet greater evils, namely, the complete occupation and direct administration of the land and the effacement of the Ibadhi doctrines in favour of those of their oppressors. Saeed well knew that the Oman tribes had no intention of tamely abandoning their religion, and were ready to respond to any call he might make on them.

At this time, an episode occurred which enraged Saeed's enemies, and gave the Wahabee Amir the pretext he sought for re-opening hostilities. Mohammed Nasir, whom Saeed had denounced to Saood as the murderer of Bedr, and who was now in possession of Semail, was lured to Muscat and treacherously imprisoned. Saeed's object in this was the recovery of the forts of Semail and Bidbid, which he wrested from Mohammed Nasir as the price of his liberty. Bitterly resenting this treatment, Mohammed, who was now as full of animosity towards Saeed as he had formerly been full of loyalty and devotion, made his way to Al-Deraya, where he sought the aid and protection of Saood. The latter had already, as we have seen, contemplated leading a force to act against Muscat, and now adopting Mohammed's cause with alacrity, he despatched his best general, Mutlak al-Mutairy, with the advance of his army to Oman.

In the early part of 1807 the political situation in Europe necessitated orders being sent to Bombay for the despatch of H.M.S. *Fox*, commanded by Captain Cochrane, with eight Company's cruisers to the Persian Gulf, as a demonstration against Turkey, which had lately declared war against Russia. The frigate, with the Persian Ambassador on board, sailed first to Bushire, and thence proceeded to Kwait, where an interview took place with the Turkish Governor, after which the *Fox* returned to India.

Enriched by the plunder of peaceful traders the Joasmees at this time greatly augmented their fleet, which, it was calculated, now consisted of 876 vessels, of which 63 were large dhows and bughlas, carrying altogether 19,000 men. In violation of the treaty

they now re-commenced their attack on English vessels, and even ventured to visit the coasts of Sind, Cutch, and Western India, which they now harassed for the first time.

In April, 1808, the *Lively*, a schooner, commanded by Lieutenant Macdonald, fell in with four pirates, and after a sharp conflict beat them off. Three of these dhows were soon after discovered at Surat and sent to Bombay, but though found guilty, were most unaccountably released to continue their depredations. About twenty puttimars, or native craft, were, it is said, captured in this cruise by other Joasmee dhows, and on these rich prizes being taken to the Gulf, a further squadron of fifty dhows was despatched to the Indian coast.

We next hear of two of the largest of the Company's cruisers, the *Mornington*, 24 guns, and the *Teignmouth*, 18 guns, being successively attacked in the Gulf by these pirates, who were, however, compelled to retire.

Another cruiser, the *Fury*, 6 guns, commanded by Lieutenant Gowan, was then attempted, as being a small vessel likely to become an easy prey, but the pirates again failed of success. For his conduct and high sense of duty, however, in defending his ship and crew, the commander received unmerited censure at Bombay. A fitting commentary on the above action of the Bombay Government took place a month or two later in the tragedy of the *Minerva*, a large trading-vessel belonging to Mr. Manisty. This ship was attacked by the Joasmees on her way up to Busra, and after a running fight of several days was carried by boarding. The *Minerva* was then taken to Ras al-Khyma, where the crew were nearly all massacred one after another in cold blood, the captain being literally chopped to pieces. A lady passenger, the wife of Lieutenant Taylor, afterwards Resident at Baghdad, was detained by the pirates until a heavy ransom had been paid for her release.

In September of this year the mission to Persia of Sir H. I. Brydges, who had been appointed Ambassador, embarked at Bombay on board the *La Nereid* frigate, 36 guns, commanded by Captain Corbett, with the *Sapphire*, commanded by Captain Davis, and

Sylph in company. The *La Nereid* arrived at Bushire on October 14th, but the *Sylph*, a small vessel of 78 tons, which had been outsailed by the others, was attacked on October 20th by a flotilla of pirates, who carried her by boarding. The Joasmees, as usual, murdered the crew, twenty-two in number, by cutting their throats over the side of the ship in the name of God, but the captain, Lieutenant Graham, though terribly wounded, managed to hide below. A few hours later, however, the *Sylph* was recovered by the *La Nereid* on her way down the Gulf. Within three days of this event, the Company's cruiser *Nautilus*, of 14 guns, commanded by Lieutenant Bennett, was menaced off Henjam, by four dhows, which came close up in order to board, but were driven off by a broadside and chased out of sight.

The increased influence of the Wahabees, however, naturally irritated the Joasmee leaders, the chief of whom, Sultan bin Sakar, fell under their displeasure and was carried by force to Nejd. But subsequently escaping to Jedda, he besought the intervention of Ibrahim Pasha, through whose mediation he was entrusted with a mission to Seyyids Salim and Saeed by Mohammed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, proposing an alliance against the Wahabee Amir. On reaching Muscat, Sultan bin Sakar communicated the proposal to Seyyids Salim and Saeed, who flattered by this notice, and willingly adopting it, wrote to Toosoon Pasha, promising co-operation. Putting this offer into action, the Seyyids at once despatched a squadron with Shaikh Sultan bin Sakar on board to Ras al-Khyma, but the object of the enterprise was not accomplished and the squadron returned to Muscat.

In the meantime, Saeed had undertaken an expedition against the Joasmee pirates, and in April, 1809, had set out with a fleet to Ras al-Khyma, to act in conjunction with a force from Bushire. Saeed's allies in the Gulf, however, failed to co-operate, his fleet became dispersed, and he was at one time in a critical situation. With a view to assist the government of Oman at this period orders were sent from Calcutta for the *Cornwallis* and another frigate to be stationed off Cape Mussendom, and many piratical craft were

captured by them and sent to Bombay, only, however, to be immediately released. Saeed returned to Muscat, unable to boast of any satisfactory achievement.

About May of this year Captain Seton, being required for political service in Sind, relinquished his post at Muscat and returned to India. At this time Major-General John Malcolm, who had proceeded in the brig *Psyche* on his second mission to Persia under orders from Lord Minto, and who had been entrusted with powers of superintendence over the Company's affairs in the Gulf, concurred with Captain Seton that unless the British Government interfered to save Muscat that port would be destroyed as a port of commerce and the Omanis driven to join the Wahabees and Joasmees, and thus swell the ranks of the enemy.

The height of audacity reached by these Joasmee ruffians, who were as bloodthirsty as they were rapacious, and who within a twelvemonth had attacked no less that eight armed English vessels, had come to be regarded as foreboding the extinction of British trade in the Gulf, and protective measures could no longer be delayed.

That the increase of piracy was due in no small degree to the wavering and infatuated policy of the Bombay Government in tying the hands of its naval officers and in regarding the pirates as *innocent and unoffending Arabs*—to use the Governor's own words—by which so many lives had been sacrificed and so much valuable property surrendered, is undeniable, as the Joasmees naturally looked upon the action of the English as sheer pusillanimity.

But though this was the main cause of their insolence, other circumstances, doubtless, contributed to their overweening self-confidence and boldness, such as the configuration of the coast, which was remarkably well suited to aid their operations. At Ras al-Khyma, for instance, there was a commodious backwater behind the town, where dhows could lie in safety far out of reach of gun-shot, but more important still, there was Khor al-Shem, a capacious inlet, eight miles in length, the existence of which was absolutely unsuspected by the English at that period. A dark, narrow gorge between black, basaltic rocks, precipitous sides, formed the entrance.

which was invisible outside to those unacquainted with it, and the pirate dhows, when chased, often suddenly vanished by passing into the inlet, leaving their pursuers bewildered at their disappearance; concealed in this obscure and safe retreat, in which no European ship had sailed, and no boat had ventured, the buccaneers could lie in security, ready to sally out and swoop down upon any luckless merchantman descried on the horizon.

The attention of the Supreme Government at Calcutta had long been drawn to the insult to British prestige and commerce in the Arabian Sea, but it was now felt that the policy of inaction had been carried too far and that it was now time to assist the Muscat Government in resisting the Wahabee power and in suppressing piracy.

The Governor-General, Lord Minto, accordingly directed the Bombay Government to prepare an expedition for service in the Gulf. The force assembled for the purpose consisted of the frigate *La Chiffone*, 36 guns, commanded by Captain Wainwright; the *Caroline*, frigate, 36 guns; and nine of the Company's cruisers, with several transports carrying the 65th Regiment, under Colonel Lionel Smith, who was in command of the expedition; part of the 47th Regiment, and about a thousand native troops. Captain Seton was appointed to be Political Officer to the expedition, from his great experience and knowledge of the country.

The instructions issued by the Bombay Government to Colonel Smith on September 7th, 1809, were of so lukewarm and conflicting a character that the operations of the expedition were rendered practically fruitless, and little or no advantage resulted from them.

The fleet sailed first to Muscat, where the leaders of the force consulted and discussed plans with the rulers of Oman, Seyyids Salim and Saeed. The fleet then moved on to Ras al-Khyma, where it arrived on November 11th. This place was captured and burnt and all its war vessels destroyed. On the expedition returning to Muscat, Salim and Saeed solicited the aid of Colonel Smith against Shinas and Khor Fakan, in co-operation with his own troops. The two forces, accordingly, sailed together, and on January 4th, 1810, stormed and captured Shinas after a desperate resistance.

During this campaign Mutlak al-Mutairy, who had been despatched from Nejd with the advance of the Wahabee army, had arrived with Mohammed Nasir at Beraimi, from whence, on hearing of the British expedition, he hastened to the aid of the Joasmees at Ras al-Khyma. Being too late for that affair, he moved across to Shinas, which he reached just after its fall. For three days the small British force awaited the Wahabee onslaught, but Mutlak declined an engagement until Colonel Smith had embarked his troops, when he immediately attacked the Omanis, and with such vigour that he completely routed them.

The position of Salim and Saeed, therefore, now became more precarious than ever, and their powerful enemy, the Wahabees, instead of being dismayed by the English operations, were only exasperated and rendered more vindictive against the rulers and people of Oman.

On the departure of the British, Saeed remained at Sohar which Mutlak, after pillaging the country round and massacring the inhabitants, began to invest. Saeed attempted negotiations, but failed; he was, nevertheless, soon able to compel Mutlak to raise the siege, and the latter then proceeded with Mohammed Nasir to Semail, which very shortly surrendered to him.

Saeed, returning to Muscat, strengthened the forts in the Batineh, still remaining to him; but the Wahabees were expecting reinforcements and were, indeed, already masters of the position. In these straits he was strongly advised by the French Consul, M. Dallons, to compromise with Mutlak, but, trusting in eventual aid from Bombay, Saeed declined this advice.

The Wahabees now raided Oman and harried the inhabitants at will, but Mutlak evidently found their subjugation a tougher task than he anticipated. On the other hand, Saeed's endeavours to rid the country of its foes were unavailing; his utmost efforts were only equal to maintaining his own independence, and when in April of the following year, 1811, Saeed, after repulsing Mutlak from the walls of Muscat, ventured to give him battle in the Maawal Valley, he suffered a disastrous defeat.

Saeed sent an appealing letter to the Bombay Government in 1810, praying for armed intervention and support against his enemies, representing that his alliance with the British in the late campaign had incensed the Wahabees against him and made them implacable in their enmity. The request, however, was not complied with, as the Government considered it impolitic to undertake hostilities against the Wahabees. Saeed then turned his attention to Persia. It was arranged that his brother Salim should proceed to Fars and request aid from the Governor-General of that province. Provided with suitable presents, Salim accordingly made his way to Shiraz, where the influence of Pishkush procured him the promised assistance of 1,500 men. Accompanied by this auxiliary force, under the command of Saadi Khan, Salim returned to Muscat and operations were at once renewed against the Wahabees. In the meantime, Saeed, taking advantage of the Egyptian successes over the Wahabees in Western Arabia, which had compelled the latter to concentrate their forces, despatched his cousin, Hilal bin Hamed, against Zobara and Al-Bahrain. The expedition was partially successful and the Wahabee agent, Abdulla bin Ufeysan, was taken prisoner, but no advantage resulted to Saeed.

The operations undertaken against the Wahabees, on the arrival of the Persian contingent, were conducted by Salim, who, in conjunction with Azzan bin Kais and Saadi Khan, marched against the Wahabees at Nakhl and obliged them to retire to Zikki ; Semail also fell, but unadvisedly pursuing their successes too far, Salim and his Persians were completely routed by Mutlak at Zikki and driven back to Burka. Mutlak took his revenge by raiding and devastating the Sharkiya as far as Ras al-Had, leaving a bloody track behind him.

Towards the end of 1811, the change at Bombay, where a new Governor, Sir Evan Nepean, had been appointed, awakened hopes in the mind of Seyyid Saeed of receiving from India that assistance which he had been long and vainly soliciting, and he determined to send another envoy to Bombay to request that a force of 2,000 troops should be despatched to hold the Wahabees in check and to prevent the occupation of that town and port. The enemy reached Bombay in

one of the Omani ships in June, 1812, but was unable to obtain a favourable reply from the Government, and returned at once to report to the Seyyids the ill-success of his mission. Mr. Bruce, the Resident at Bushire, who happened to be at this time at Bombay, was instructed to call at Muscat on his way back to the Gulf to communicate with the Seyyids on the state of affairs, and to appoint a native agent there on behalf of the Company, who was to act in subordination to the Bushire Residency, which thus from the early part of 1813 was authorized to assume sole charge of Persian Gulf matters.

Before leaving Muscat Mr. Bruce was desired by Seyyid Saeed to accompany him to the Pirate coast and give moral support to the operations he was about to undertake in order to reinstate Shaikh Sultan bin Sakar at Ras al-Khyma, and as Mr. Bruce had instructions to renew Captain Seton's treaty of 1806, he agreed to do so.

The expedition sailed accordingly, but as Shaikh Shakboot of the Beni Yas, who was expected to join in the affair, failed to give any effective aid, Saeed did not succeed in his enterprise, and returned to Muscat discomfited.

This espousal of Sultan bin Sakar's quarrel and subsequent operations against the Wahabee nominee at Ras al-Khyma naturally gave fresh offence at Al-Deraya, and Mutlak, who had for some time suspended hostilities and had been residing at Beraimi, received orders to move against Muscat. He accordingly gathered his forces, quitted Beraimi, and marched along the Batineh as far as Mesnaah. Azzan bin Kais made terms with him *en route*, and Saeed, unable to offer opposition, arranged a personal interview and induced him to retire, by the payment of 40,000 dollars. With this amount Mutlak returned to Nejd, where his action in abandoning the campaign would appear to have been disapproved of by the Amir Saood. Another general named Al-Azdakah was appointed to succeed him and started for Oman, but was murdered on the way. Mutlak was then again despatched in command with orders to renew hostilities and chastise the Omanis. In the month of November, 1813, Mutlak set out on his last campaign; he marched through the Al-Dhahireh to Al-Sharkiya, intending to direct his operations against the tribes of

this province. He reached, almost unopposed, the country of the Hejrieen, but here he met with a resistance he had hardly looked for, as the tribes had gathered in great force. In the first encounter Mutlak was shot in the breast by a musket ball and fell dead, and the Wahabees immediately fell into disorder, became dispersed, and retreated hastily to Al-Beraimi. Mutlak's arms and coat-of-mail were carried to Muscat, and the dark cloud of Wahabee domination over Oman was scattered, while the hopes of the Wahabee Amir attaining the conquest of Oman were lost. To his able and dashing generalship the success of the Wahabee invasions had been chiefly due, and the Amir had no one of similar capacity to replace him.

Saeed's fortunes were now in the ascendant; he had passed through the period of adversity, and his career henceforward, though not marked by uninterrupted success, was brilliant and prosperous. Early in 1814 the death of Azzan bin Kais at Mokha, in the Red Sea, while returning from pilgrimage, gave Saeed the possession of Sohar, and three months later the death of the Amir Saood from fever at Deraya was a still more decided turn of fortune's wheel in his favour.

The lull in the piratical operations of the Joasmees, caused by Lionel Smith's attack on Ras al-Khyma, was of short duration. Not twelve months had elapsed since its departure before they had reorganized their fleets, recruited their strength, and raised their heads in maritime supremacy in the Gulf.

Early in 1811 H.M.S. *Lion*, 64 guns, commanded by Captain Heathcote, with the Ambassador to Persia, Sir George Ousely, on board, learned that a pirate fleet of twenty-six dhows was cruising off Lingah, and that other vessels from pirate ports were moving about. Their depredations continued to increase and extend more widely, even the Indian and Mekran coasts not being left unmolested by them.

Relieved from foreign pressure, Seyyid Saeed in this year started on a second expedition for the purpose of establishing Shaikh Sultan bin Sakar in his old stronghold, Ras al-Khyma, but the supineness of his allies caused the failure of the chief object of the enterprise,

but he succeeded in giving Shaikh Sultan possession of Shargah, a town a few miles to the westward, and before quitting the Pirate coast concluded a truce with the Joasmee tribe.

Some Indian vessels navigating under British colours had been pirated off the Kattiawar coast in August, 1814, and Mr. Bruce called on Hassan bin Rahmah, the Joasmee chief of Ras al-Khyma, for explanations, but the boat by which the letter was sent was seized and the messenger ill-treated. This was followed by the capture of a vessel containing remounts for the 17th Lancers, and by the seizure of six boats off the Sind Coast.

The Joasmees now, in 1815, turned their attention to the Red Sea; having raided Hasek and Dhofar and other ports, they began to intercept the trade between India and Mocha, and on one occasion four Surat pattimars, with cargoes valued at twelve lakhs of rupees, were taken and their crews massacred. About the same time the pirates encountered the Muscat frigate *Caroline*, of 40 guns, commanded by Seyyid Saeed in person, off Kuriyat, and nearly mastered her. His Highness was wounded in the affair and escaped with difficulty.

Shortly afterwards an English merchant ship was taken off Muscat and her crew massacred as usual. This was followed by an attack on the Company's cruiser *Aurora*, and on the American vessels *Persia* and *Cintra*. In 1816 the fortunes of the Joasmees continued to rise. In the beginning of the year Seyyid Saeed conducted a third expedition against Ras al-Khyma and blockaded this port for four months, but without effecting any result.

In September an expedition was despatched from Bombay consisting of H.M.S. *Challenger*, 18 guns, and the Company's cruisers *Mercury* and *Vestal*, to demand satisfaction for the piracies on the Surat vessels in the Gulf of Aden. Mr. Bruce joined this squadron at Ras al-Khyma in November, but the negotiations entirely failed. Shaikh Hassan not only refused redress, but claimed the right to pirate Indian vessels, saying that if the English were going to protect them there would be nothing left for the Arabs to plunder.

The Amir Abdulla, who had succeeded his father Saood at Deraya, now appointed a new agent at Muscat, with instructions to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the Oman rulers and to endeavour to bring about a permanent peace, the reverses sustained by the Wahabees at the hands of the Egyptians having compelled them to concentrate their strength in Nejd. The Agent's efforts at negotiation at Muscat at first promised success, but the question of Ras al-Khyma proved an insurmountable obstacle, and hostilities recommenced.

For some time after this His Highness's attention was engaged at home in repressing internal disorders in the Nakl district, where Himyar bin Suliman al-Yaarebi, the leading representative of the last dynasty, had, in league with Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, seized the fort and revolted against Saeed's authority. Saeed attempted to dispossess Himyar, but was defeated in the field; he succeeded eventually by treachery in getting Himyar into his power and putting him to death.

Saeed had no sooner returned from his expedition against Ras al-Khyma, in April, 1816, than he projected a campaign against Al-Bahrain, an object on which he had long set his heart. The Muscat armament proceeded to the Gulf in June, and together with His Highness's Persian allies landed on the Island of Arad, but were attacked and routed by the Attoobees with great slaughter, Saeed's younger brother, Hamed, being slain in the fight. The Resident, Mr. Bruce, who had quitted Bahrain in H.M.S. frigate *Favourite*, commanded by Captain Maud, shortly before the expedition arrived, did his utmost to dissuade Saeed from his enterprise, and offered to mediate and endeavour to make terms of peace, but His Highness declined his assistance, and after suffering defeat, as above stated, and which was due in great measure to the treachery of his allies, sailed away to Congoon to embark a force which had been promised him, to act against the Wahabees. He fortunately discovered in time that he was being led into a snare by the Persians, who intended to carry him a prisoner to Shiraz, and abandoning his project against Bahrain, returned to Oman.

It was at this time that Mohammed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, was contemplating the final destruction of the Wahabee Empire, and the Amir Abdulla, foreseeing the coming blow, had need of every available man to aid in the defence of his country, and not only was every Nejdian soldier withdrawn from Oman, but the Arab spirit of clannishness, or perhaps the ingrained hatred of Arab against Turk, induced a large contingent from the Ghafiri or Maaddic tribes of Al-Dhahireh to flock to the standard of the Amir at Deraya.

In September, 1817, communications were received from the French Governor of Bourbon, proposing a renewal of commercial relations between that island and Muscat, and a favourable reply having been returned by Saeed, a brisk trade sprung up, for the better regulation of which a new convention was signed by Saeed on March 30th, 1817. This convention appears to have remained in force until the negotiations of the French Commercial Treaty of 1844.

During this year (1817) and the next Saeed was entirely occupied with intertribal disputes and in contending with his naval enemies, the Joasmees, who attacked and made themselves masters of Khor Fakan. But this was almost their last act of aggression, as the career of Arab piracy was now doomed. It was high time that proper measures were taken against it, for in this year the Joasmees were actively marauding the Indian Coasts and intercepting all trading vessels. They had captured many rich prizes and murdered their crews, some of them within seventy miles of Bombay. It was estimated that the pirates had sixty-four war dhows, besides smaller craft off the Indian Coasts, manned by about 7,000 men and cruisers in squadrons of four to ten. The large dhows were built with high sterns reaching above the bulwarks of a frigate and enabling them to capture large vessels by their favourite method of boarding. Many of them were provided with a long gun on the upper deck traversing in every direction, and thus became, with their strong complement of men, very formidable opponents.

After six years of warfare Mohammed Ali had entrusted his son, Ibrahim Pasha, with the task of subduing the Wahabees by seizing

their capital. During the year 1817 Ibrahim toiled across the Arabian desert, and in April, 1818, began the siege of Deraya, which was captured and razed to the ground in September, when the victorious General returned to the Red Sea. The overthrow of these fanatical puritans, by whom the Joasmees had been so long and persistently supported and controlled, gave the Indian Government the opportunity for which they had so long waited, of striking a mortal blow at them and putting an end once and for ever to the insults and depredations to which commerce had been subjected for so many years; and a naval and military expedition for the reduction of Ras al-Khyma and the consequent annihilation of the piratical fleets was resolved on. Previously, however, to the despatch of the force, it was deemed advisable to send an envoy to confer with the Oman Government on the subject, and to push on to Nejd to propose to Ibrahim Pasha that the English and Turkish troops should act conjointly in attacking the Joasmee stronghold. Captain Sadler, who had been selected for the mission, arrived at Muscat on May 7th, 1819, in the *Thetis*, 14 guns, and was well received by Seyyid Saeed, who promised to co-operate by land and sea, but declined to join the field with the Turks, whom he detested as much as he did the Wahabees. Captain Sadler then proceeded to Kateef, and traversed Nejd to meet Ibrahim Pasha, whose camp he reached near Medina in September, 1819. The mission proved abortive, as it had started too late, and Mohammed Ali, having already accomplished his object, refused any participation in the Indian Government's enterprise.

The expedition, now organized at Bombay under the command of Sir W. Grant Keir, consisted of the *Liverpool*, 50 guns, commanded by Captain Collier; the *Eden*, 26 guns, commanded by Captain Loch; the *Curlew*, and six Company's cruisers, together with a land force of 1,600 European and 1,400 native troops embarked in transports.

The fleet sailed from Bombay in November, 1819, and rendezvoused at Kishm, but the General, Sir W. G. Keir, proceeded to Muscat, where H.H. Seyyid Saeed agreed to furnish three ships and 4,000 men and to accompany the expedition himself. Early

in December, after a short bombardment, the troops were disembarked, Ras al-Khyma was taken and the ports destroyed. The town was found to be empty, as the Arabs had removed everything. Shaikh Hassan and his tribe then submitted to the General. About eighty vessels, large and small, fell into the hands of the force, but the greater number escaped capture, having probably sought concealment in Khor al-Shem.

The General having arranged by treaty with Shaikh Hassan bin Rahmah, Shaikh Sultan bin Sakar, Shaikh Shakboot, and the Chief of Debaye for the good order and tranquillity of the Gulf, sailed in H.M.S. *Liverpool* for Bombay in March, 1820, but to ensure the observance of the treaty, Ras al-Khyma remained in the occupation of the English until the following July.

After the reduction of Ras al-Khyma piracy for some years remained in abeyance, but much vigilance and care were required to prevent the tribes on the Arab littoral from again resorting to their former practices, as the jealousy between them, and pugnacity towards each other, were so great that they were constantly in collision, and it may be as well to record here the few instances of piracy that took place in following years, until it was quite extinguished.

In 1824 a vessel belonging to Al-Bahrain was pirated by two boats from Shargah, with the connivance of Sultan bin Sakar, but the Commodore in the Gulf, on hearing of it, demanded and obtained full satisfaction.

In 1828 a piracy was committed off Sohar by the Joasmees, who massacred the crew, fourteen in number, of the captured vessel. The aggressor in this case, Muslim bin Rashid, was put to death and the cargo recovered.

In 1841 another outrage occurred off Bidda and Commodore Brucks proceeded thither to obtain redress, but it was not until Bidda was bombarded that the pirates submitted and complied with demands.

In 1845 one Hamaid bin Majdal established himself on an island and commenced piracy on his own account with three dhows, but he was soon after attacked by Commodore Hawkins in the

Coote and reduced to submission. Nine years later Hamaid bin Majdal, having gathered 2,000 men near Kateef, renewed his piratical depredations, but Commodore Robinson operated against him with gunboats, and after much trouble succeeded in seizing his vessel and scattering the band.

A few months later a joint expedition was undertaken by the English and by Saeed against the Beni Bu Ali tribe in Jaalan, the immediate cause of which, so far as the British were concerned, was the murder of the interpreter of the *Mercury* brig which had been despatched to Al-Askhara to enquire into certain piratical acts committed by the tribe. Part of the force, stationed by Sir W. G. Keir in the Gulf, consisting of six companies of Native Infantry and six guns, was now embarked by the Political Agent, Captain Thompson, who had resolved on immediate hostilities, and taken from Kishm to Muscat.

Saeed had for some years been at variance with the Beni Bu Ali tribe, on account of their having coalesced with the Wahabees and adopted their tenets in 1811, and he had since been seeking for an opportunity to crush them. The expedition was undoubtedly due in part to Saeed's instigation and encouragement, and he had been allowed to join it with about 1,000 men. Captain Thompson sailed from Muscat to Soor and the combined force marched from that port to the Beni Bu Ali country on November 1st, 1820. The tribes were summoned to surrender, practically unconditionally, by Saeed, but refused to give up their arms, and a contest ensued in which the British force was completely defeated with a loss of six officers, 270 men, and all the guns. The survivors retreated by way of Al-Sharkiya and Oman, through the Wady Akk to Muscat, where they arrived on November 17th. Saeed displayed great gallantry and coolness throughout the affair, and was wounded while endeavouring to save a British soldier. In acknowledgment of his services a sword of honour was presented to him by the Governor-General, who in 1821 despatched Dr. Jukes to Muscat to deliver it.

To retrieve this disaster a large force was despatched, under General Sir Lionel Smith, from Bombay in January, 1821. The

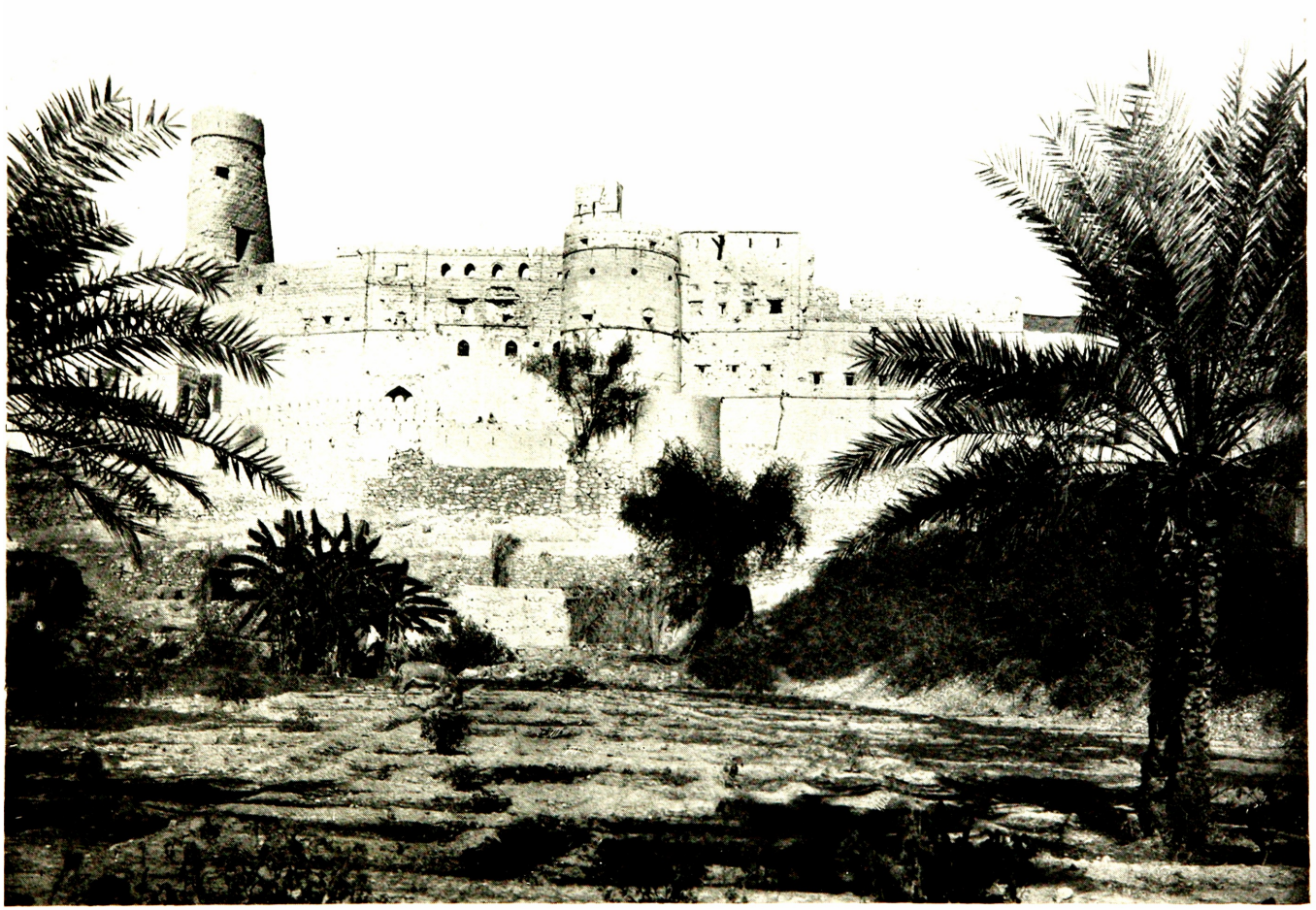
General attacked the Beni Bu Ali in March, and after severe fighting, destroyed the forts and almost annihilated the tribe, which to this day has never recovered its former strength and prestige. Saeed was not permitted to take part in this campaign, though he personally accompanied the troops. It was during his absence from Muscat on this occasion that he had to mourn the death of his elder brother Salim, who died of paralysis in February, 1821. A large number of prisoners of the Beni Bu Ali were carried to Bombay by General Smith, where they were detained for about two years, when they were released and sent back to Oman with a sufficient sum to enable them to rebuild their houses and aqueducts.

It was subsequent to, and to some extent in connection with, the expedition under Sir W. G. Keir that the Survey of the Persian Gulf and Oman coasts was undertaken by the Court of Directors, who had at length begun to understand the necessity of acquiring information regarding the navigation of these seas. In 1820 the ship *Discovery* and the brig *Psyche*, commanded by Captains Morgan and Guy respectively, were sent from Bombay with orders to commence the survey along the western side of Cape Mussendom and the Pirate coast, and it was at the very outset of their operations that the remarkable creek, Khor al-Shem, which had been of such importance to the pirates as a hidden port, was discovered. It was named by the surveyors Elphinstone Inlet, after Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, then Governor of Bombay. Captain Morgan soon retired from ill-health, and was succeeded by Captain Guy; this officer shortly afterwards gave place to Captain Brucks, who continued to conduct the survey of the Gulf until its completion. In 1828-9 the *Discovery*, with the schooner *Inspector*, began the survey of the Oman coast from the Eastern side of Cape Mussendom from Malcolm's Inlet to Lima, Dibba, Khor Fakan to Sohar, and thence along the Batineh coast to Muscat and Muttrah, which were first surveyed in 1828. The *Discovery*, proving unseaworthy, had been replaced very early in this work by the *Benares*, commanded by Captain Haines, who subsequently surveyed the South Arabian coast as far as Aden.

In 1822 Captain F. Moresby, R.N., in His Majesty's ship *Menai*, was ordered to Muscat to conclude a treaty with Saeed for the suppression of the slave trade. Saeed granted all concessions asked for, which would, if strictly enforced, have caused him a loss of £5,000 or £6,000 a year.

Relieved from all troubles, foreign and domestic, and feeling that he had securely consolidated his power, Saeed now undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. He appointed his nephew, Mohammed bin Salim, Regent during his absence, and sailed in the *Liverpool*, 74 guns, which had been specially prepared for the voyage in Bombay, in March, 1824. This journey was performed with great lavishness of expenditure. The Pasha of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, sent officers to meet him, and nothing was omitted by them and the Turkish Governor to give Saeed a fitting reception on his arrival at Jedda. On the way to Mecca and Medina he was accompanied by a large escort and entertained with great sumptuousness. He created everywhere an immense sensation, and his popularity among the people was not lessened by the generosity of his gifts. Notwithstanding his being a Kharejite or dissenter, Saeed was received with the greatest respect and honour by the Shereef, and on his departure was presented with splendid gifts by Mohammed Ali. Saeed was received on his return to Muscat with loud acclamations, and the rejoicings lasted several days.

In July, 1826, Saeed sent a fleet to blockade Bushire in the absence of the Governor, Shaikh Abdul Russool, though at the request of the Resident, he refrained from attacking the town. The Shaikh himself was captured at sea on his way home shortly after, and detained a prisoner until the following year, when he paid a ransom of 80,000 dollars and agreed to surrender a Persian princess, a granddaughter of Fath Ali Shah and a sister of Reza Kola Mirza, who had been promised to Saeed, but had been delayed at Bushire by the Governor, who was desirous of marrying her himself. In November of the same year, Saeed, having been unable to prevail on the Government of Busra to pay the stipulated subsidy, the arrears of which had amounted to 104,000 dollars, equipped a fleet to enforce



WIND TOWER AND FORT AT BAHILA. [*See p.* 265]

his demand. In an engagement that ensued the Turkish fleet was defeated and Busra was blockaded until the Pasha made terms.

The following year was spent by Saeed in a fruitless war with Al-Bahrain, for which he had made long and expensive preparations. With the object of taking the Attoobees by surprise, Saeed contradicted the rumours prevalent of his intentions and assured the Shaikh of his pacific feelings, until about a month before his arrival there with his fleet, which was in November, 1828. In his attack on the island, however, his force was completely routed and many slain, while he himself was slightly wounded. Being thus discouraged in his enterprise, he abandoned its further prosecution and returned to Muscat. A peace was concluded between the belligerents on terms not unfavourable to Saeed in December of the following year.

In 1829 the Chief of Dhofar, Mohammed Akil, was murdered at Merbat, and Saeed immediately despatched a force to take possession of that district. This force only remained a few months, as it was required for service in East Africa, whither Saeed was about to proceed with the object of subduing the district and island of Mombasa. Having arbitrarily seized and imprisoned his cousin, Hilal bin Hamed, with a view to prevent his intrigues with the tribes, and leaving Mohammed bin Salim in charge of the Government, he sailed on December 15th, 1829, for his East African dominions, which were to occupy his chief attention for the next fifteen years.

The first occasion in which Saeed had interfered in Zanzibar territory had been in 1812, when he sent a Wali named Khalaf bin Nasir, and built a fort at Lamoo. Ahmed bin Mohammed died in 1814, and was succeeded by his son Abdulla, a brave and enterprising chief, who, resolving to separate from the mother country, refused to send any tribute to Muscat. Being conscious, however, that this course would inevitably lead to a contest, Abdulla sailed to Bombay and endeavoured to secure the alliance of the Indian Government.

Some time later internecine broils at Patta, the suzerainty over which was claimed by the Wali of Mombasa, compelled one of the parties to call in the aid of Saeed. A small force, under Abdulla Ali, was sent from Muscat, which established Bwana Shaikh as Saeed's

vassal. The Wali of Mombasa, however, soon recovered his predominating influence, and matters so remained until fresh dissensions arose, when Saeed again invited him to interfere, and, burning with jealousy against the Mezeri Chief, sent a second expedition in 1822 under Hamed bin Ahmed, who received the submission of Brava, Patta, and Siwi, while Saeed's Wali at Zanzibar, hearing of Ahmed's proceedings, seconded him by attacking Pemba and expelling the Mombasa garrison.

Abdulla bin Ahmed died in 1823, and, as the succession was disputed, the people elected Suliman bin Ali, the ex-Wali of Pemba, to act as Regent temporarily. Saeed was at this time getting ready another fleet at Muscat, and had issued orders that his people were not to trade with Mombasa, a measure which, in connection with the recent loss of Pemba, the source of its food supply, did much to weaken Suliman's position. Apprehensive of the result of a contest with Muscat, Suliman bin Ali had written to the Government of Bombay soliciting protection, but no answer was received to this appeal.

It happened, however, that on the 3rd December, 1823, the ten-gun brig *Barracouta*, which had left England in 1822 in concert with the frigate *Leven*, 28 guns, commanded by Captain Owen, who had been commissioned to survey the coasts of East Africa and Madagascar, sailed into port. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Suliman immediately sent his nephew on board to explain the position of affairs and to request Captain Vidal's permission to hoist the British flag and to place the town and fort in the hands of the King of England, in order to avoid its subjugation by the ruler of Muscat. Captain Vidal, who was indisposed, took time to consider his reply, and the next day sent Lieutenant Boteler on shore to inform the Wali Suliman that he declined to accord British protection to Mombasa, but would be happy to forward any letters on the subject from the Wali to the Government of Bombay or the Cape of Good Hope.

The *Barracouta* sailed from Mombasa on December 7th, and a few days later the Muscat flotilla, commanded by Abdulla bin Snleyyim, arrived in port. On sighting the fleet, the Wali Suliman, notwithstanding Captain Vidal's refusal to comply with his request,

had hoisted the British flag, hoping thereby to deter Abdulla bin Suleyyim from commencing hostilities. The ruse, however, completely failed, and the blockade had continued for two months when, on February 7th, 1824, the frigate *Leven* anchored in the harbour. A similar application was immediately made for protection by the Wali to Captain Owen, who, taking a different view from that of his subordinate, Captain Vidal, agreed to a convention, accepting the sovereignty over Mombasa from Melinda to Pangani, on the part of England, on condition of the abolition of slavery. The Arab commander, Abdulla bin Suleyyim, at once placed himself under the orders of Captain Owen, and agreed to give up the blockade. Captain Owen appointed one of his officers, Lieutenant Reitz, as Governor, with a midshipman, Mr. Phillips, and four men as guard, and sailed on February 13th for Pemba and Zanzibar, where the Governor, however, Saeed Mohammed al-Akhabari, refused to surrender Pemba, which had been a dependency of Mombasa previous to present hostilities.

In September following, the *Andromache*, commanded by Commodore Nourse, arrived at Mombasa, and appointed Lieutenant Emery as Governor in the place of Lieutenant Reitz, who had died of fever on May 29th.

Captain Owen revisited Mombasa on November 2nd, 1824, and on December 2nd the *Leven* and *Barracouta* sailed again to continue the survey, after according to Brava British protection on similar terms, and Captain Owen made an arrangement with the Wali of Zanzibar that no interference should take place on the Wali's part with the East African coasts until the decision of the Government became known.

In 1826 Suliman bin Ali was deposed by Salim, the brother of the late Wali Abdulla bin Ahmed; Lieutenant Emery, the Governor at Mombasa, not interfering in the matter. It was not until two years after Captain Owen had agreed to the protectorate that the English Cabinet, at the instance of the Indian Government, disavowed Captain Owen's proceedings, and the British commandant was removed from Mombasa, which was left with Pemba and Brava to settle its own quarrel with Saeed. Saeed lost no time in writing

to Salim and summoning him to surrender. Salim in reply offered to acknowledge a nominal sway and to remit a tribute, but refused to yield the fort. This did not satisfy Saeed, who, however, was too much engrossed in home affairs to be able to pay much attention to Mombasa, and it was not until 1829 that, having completed his preparations, he sailed in the *Liverpool* with a large fleet and 1,200 men from Muscat, expectant of an easy victory. The sight of this imposing force riding at anchor before his little island did not terrify Salim; he refused defiantly Saeed's demand for submission, and declined to accept his invitation to an interview, stating he was prepared for defence. A general assault was then made by Saeed, but it was repulsed with heavy loss, and after several ineffectual attempts Saeed deemed it prudent to raise the siege and to retire to Zanzibar.

In the meantime serious disorders were taking place in Oman, Incensed at her brother's imprisonment, Jokha, the sister of Hilal, seized the fort of Sowaik and razed the Batineh. Hamed also joined in the insurrection, made himself master of Sohar, Khaboora and Shinas, and prepared to march on Muscat. Mohammed bin Salim, seriously alarmed, sent a vessel to recall Saeed from Zanzibar, and appealed to Bombay for help. Two cruisers were ordered to support him and to prevent an attack being made on Muscat. The Resident of Bushire, Captain Hennell, also kept other vessels ready and warned Hamed not to attempt an attack. Saeed returned to Oman in May, 1830, and pretended to think that the rebellion had been of an insignificant character, and that he had been recalled without reason. Nevertheless, he was unable to recover either Sohar or Khaboora from Hamed, and had to content himself with the restitution of Shinas. In an expedition against Sohar, in February, 1831, undertaken by Saeed, he was disastrously defeated by Hamed, with a loss of 400 or 500 men, and had to retreat with his finances and reputation reduced to a very low ebb.

Early in the next year, Saeed set out on a fresh expedition to East Africa in the *Liverpool*, with the intention of again besieging Mombasa, but this time he deemed it advisable to strengthen the

Regency, which was to rule Oman in his absence, by associating his eldest son Hilal and Saood bin Ali of Burka with Mohammed bin Salim. Saeed's force consisted of 1,400 men in four ships and six bughlas, and, having on arrival spent three days in fruitless negotiations, commenced to bombard the town and forts. This proved unavailing and overtures were again resorted to. Salim bin Ahmed, on receiving hostages, came on board the *Liverpool* and a convention was concluded to the effect that Salim should recognize Saeed's sovereignty, and should continue to hold the governorship of Mombasa as hereditary in his family, that he should also hold and reside in the fort, which was, however, to be garrisoned by fifty men appointed by Saeed, and that the customs should be equally divided between His Highness and Salim. Saeed then entered and formally took possession of the fort, and appointed Saeed bin Khalfan as Akeed or Commandant. Instead of fifty, however, Saeed introduced a garrison of 200 men, and then ordered Salim to quit the fort and reside in the town. Before leaving, His Highness repaired the fort and stationed a garrison of 350 men, Belooches and Arabs, in it, and then set sail for Zanzibar.

Saeed appears to have already resolved to fix his residence at Zanzibar, for he began to build a palace at Mentony, and to lay out clove and rice plantations. But he was not destined to enjoy tranquillity long, for he had, in fact, no sooner left Muscat than disturbances of a serious character broke out, and the integrity of his dominions was threatened; these disturbances were due chiefly to harem intrigues and to the existing jealousy between Saood bin Ali and Mohammed bin Salim.

Taking advantage of the arrival of Hilal and Mohammed at Burka, whither they had proceeded *en route* to Rostak, which had been made over to Hilal, Saood seized and imprisoned both of them and then laid siege to Mesnaah. Hamed bin Azzan, Hilal bin Mohammed, and Sultan bin Sakar, also took up arms, the last seizing Khor Fakan and Dibba, and the two former beleaguering Rostak. The Moza took the lead on behalf of Seyyid Saeed, and was joined by Talib and Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, with 1,500

Ghafiris, at Muscat, while the Beni Naeem, at their request, made a diversion against Sohar. To support Saeed's rule the Resident at Bushire wrote a warning letter to the insurgents, and despatched his assistant with a naval force to Muscat, but in the meantime Saood had released his prisoners on payment of 8,000 dollars, and on the arrival of the Assistant-Resident at Burka, Saood withdrew his pretensions and exculpated himself by saying that he had only acted in self-defence.

The quelling of this rebellion and the restoration of tranquillity was attributed solely to the prompt support afforded to Saeed's authority by the British Government, which encouraged and brought forward His Highness's friends, while it effectually checked and dismayed the insurgents.

Saeed returned from Zanzibar on September 10th, 1832, and after appointing Saood to Rostak, on condition of his giving up Burka, solicited aid in recovering Khor Fakan and Dibba, but this was refused by the Government, and he was advised to remain at home in future and protect his Arabian dominions. Saeed, when starting from Zanzibar, had ordered Hamed bin Ahmed, the Wali of Zanzibar, to reduce Magdesho with the Mombasa fleet; Hamed bombarded Magdesho, which submitted, and his sailors sacked the town. Abdulla bin Suleyyim was killed on this occasion. His old foes, the Wahabees, had by this time again turned their attention towards Oman, and their attitude caused Saeed much anxiety. He was not in a position to offer any effectual resistance to their encroachments, and, under the advice of the British authorities, deemed it his best policy to enter into friendly relations with them. He accordingly agreed to pay them an annual subsidy of 5,000 dollars on condition of the integrity of his dominions being respected; a stipulation was also made that each party should assist the other in quelling rebellions in their respective countries, but this latter engagement was considered impolitic and was disapproved of by the British, as leading to possible embarrassments.

The arrival at Muscat at this time of the United States sloop of war *Peacock*, with Mr. Roberts, who had been appointed

Plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with the kingdom of Oman, was a notable event in the life of Saeed. The growing importance of Muscat and Zanzibar as commercial depôts had begun to attract foreign merchants, and improvements in the Customs regulations soon became a necessity. The chief part of the trade and customs farm was still, as it had been for centuries, in the hands of Indian traders, whose position was well known and assured, and in whose favour no cause had arisen for England to interfere. The American merchants, however, were in a different position; they had only begun to trade with Zanzibar some ten or twelve years previously, and had already suffered so much from the exactions and obstructions to which they had been subjected by the Farmer of Customs. They compelled them to make representations to their Government, which thus took the lead in entering into engagements with Oman to remove grievances and place its commerce on a secure and satisfactory basis.

The treaty, which was concluded in September, 1833, was of a comprehensive character and well considered in its details, and formed the prototype on which the English and French treaties were subsequently drafted. Saeed's engagements with foreign powers had heretofore been confined to conventions with British India and French colonies, and it was with unconcealed pride and gratification that he now for the first time found himself placed on a level with the rulers of civilized states, and, though the capitulations he had bound himself to observe complicated his former relations, the treaty, as he probably foresaw and understood, had the effect of raising his position and increasing the trade and prosperity of his country.

It was not in accordance with Saeed's character that he should allow the opportunity to slip without intriguing to gain some advantage for himself, and as the conquest of Mombasa was the matter now uppermost in his mind, he offered to allow the Americans to erect factories where they pleased, at Zanzibar or on the East African coast, on condition of their rendering him armed assistance in the prosecution of his plans. It does not appear that the United States Government reciprocated Saeed's views, nor is it likely they would have

consented to engage in such an enterprise, but the news of the proposal was received in India with the reverse of pleasure, and His Majesty's ship *Imogene* was soon despatched to observe the state of affairs. Captain Hart reached Zanzibar in 1834 and was able not only to frustrate the proposed scheme but to obtain Saeed's consent to the negotiation of a similar treaty with England.

To return to Africa: Saeed had no sooner quitted Zanzibar in August, 1832, than a rupture broke out at Mombasa, the result of which was the restoration of Mezini independence. Saeed had instructed the Wali of Pemba, Nasir bin Sultan al-Meskeri, a bitter enemy of the Mezini, to proceed to Mombasa and assume the Waliship from Salim. In this demand he was supported by the commandant of the garrison, for whom he had probably brought written orders. Salim, however, refused to submit to this violation of the treaty, and ordered Nasir to quit the place in twenty-four hours. Nasir then shut himself up in the fort, and commenced to bombard the town, which had no means of replying. The whole population, however, siding with Salim, blockaded the fort, and cut off the supplies, and the garrison, being at length reduced to extremities, were compelled to capitulate after a siege of seven months. The commandant and his men were allowed to leave Mombasa unmolested, but Nasir was detained and kept in irons. An abortive attempt to relieve the place was made by Saeed, who sent Hamed bin Ahmed in the *Shah Allum* to assist Nasir, but he arrived too late.

It was not until about November, 1833, that Saeed, having arranged terms with the Wahabee General, Saeed bin Mutlak, was able to devote his energies to the re-conquest of Mombasa. Having appointed his third son, Thowaini, his deputy at Muscat, His Highness set sail in the *Rahmanee*, with the *Liverpool*, 74 guns, two corvettes, and 1,400 men, and anchored off Mombasa Fort. Salim and the Mezinis, fearing the vengeance of Nasir, should the latter ever gain power over them, strangled him in prison, and Saeed, enraged at this action, immediately commenced a bombardment. His attacks, however, were repulsed by the Mezinis, who captured and destroyed two bughlas, and Saeed, after eight days' ineffectual war-

fare, had recourse to negotiations. Saeed pretended to regret his precipitate hostilities, and proposed peace on the basis of the last treaty. This was accepted by Salim, who agreed to acknowledge Saeed's sovereignty, but made proviso that the citadel was not to be occupied by Saeed's men. Saeed induced two of Salim's relations to accompany him, and with this appearance of victory he proceeded to Zanzibar in triumph.

Almost from the time of his first stay in Zanzibar, Seyyid Saeed had been in correspondence with Radama II., King of Madagascar, and about six years after the death of that great ruler in 1828, His Highness sent an envoy in the frigate *Piedmontese* to Ranavolana Manjaka, Radama's widow and successor, to request her hand in marriage. His matrimonial proposals were slighted by the Queen, who does not appear to have treated the ambassadors with particular distinction; she offered him, however, a young princess as wife instead of herself.

Soon after, Saeed sent an expedition against Siwi, which had revolted. Salim assisted the people of Siwi, and Saeed was defeated with immense loss. At Patta and Siwi, again, further aggressive movements were equally unsuccessful.

Saeed's stay at Zanzibar was again of short duration, his ambitious schemes had no sooner led him to distant shores than internecine troubles at home recalled him to restore order. The breaker of the peace on this occasion was Hamed bin Azzan, who, taking advantage of the murder of Saood bin Ali by his cousin, Sultan bin Ahmed, marched on Rostak and took it, and then prepared to attack Semail, the Wali of which, Mohammed Nasir al-Jabry, had lately died. It was feared that Hamed, by the acquisition of these forts, might be in a position to overawe and seize Muscat, and the British Resident, in July, 1834, with a view to support Saeed's government and authority, moved down to Muscat and informed Hamed that his persistence in rebellion would lead to his being considered an enemy of the British Government. This intervention was effective in checking Hamed's designs for a time, but a few months later his irrepressible ambition prompted him to take up arms again and seize Sowaik, from which

fort, however, he was very quickly dislodged by a force despatched from Muscat. Hamed's popularity in the country, nevertheless, continued to increase, and although Thowaini called in the Joasmees and the Beni Yas tribes to his aid, he was able to effect nothing against his cousin until the return of Saeed from Zanzibar in April, 1835. Saeed immediately took the field and proceeded against Sohar, but although this expedition returned with only a bare semblance of success, his presence at home was sufficient to re-establish his authority and put an end to Hamed's hostilities.

It was in November, 1835, that Lieutenant Wellsted, of the Indian Navy, the pioneer and foremost explorer of Oman, arrived at Muscat in the schooner *Cyrene*. To his pen we are indebted not only for the best description of Eastern Arabia, but the first correct map of the country, taken from personal notes and scientific observations. Lieutenant Wellsted spent several months in traversing the various provinces, receiving every aid and protection from His Highness Seyyid Saeed.

The famous experimental voyage to test the navigability of the River Euphrates as an alternative route to the Red Sea was carried out by Colonel Chesney with two steamers built for the purpose at Laird's. The expedition started from Bir, on the Euphrates, in March, 1836, and the surviving steamer *Euphrates* (the *Tigris* having been lost on the way) arrived at the Persian Gulf in June. Colonel Chesney, having completed his work, left for Bombay in the following November in the steamer *Hugh Lindsay*. It may here be noted that it was in this vessel, the *Hugh Lindsay*, of 411 tons, that Captain John Wilson had, six years before, performed the remarkable feat of steaming to Suez from Bombay in thirty-two days and had subsequently performed the same voyage on several occasions. In visiting Busra this year he thus became the pioneer of steam navigation in the Persian Gulf as he had been in the Red Sea. One of the medical officers attached to Colonel Chesney's expedition was Dr. Helfer, who, with his wife, on arrival at Bushire, embarked on board the *George Bentinck*, and on the way to Calcutta touched at Muscat, where Madame Helfer took the opportunity of visiting His Highness's

harem, of which, as well as of the town, she gives a graphic description in her *Travels*.

Affairs in Oman for some time occupied Saeed's attention, but, although pining to return to Zanzibar, he was fearful to leave Muscat while Hamed was unsubdued, as the latter would be certain to take advantage of his absence. His Highness, therefore, in 1836, entered into an arrangement with Saeed bin Mutlak to unite in expelling Hamed from Sohar and Rostak. Saeed bin Mutlak accordingly besieged Sohar by land with 2,000 men, while the Muscat fleet blockaded it by sea. Hamed's position was getting desperate, when he succeeded in rousing His Highness's suspicions as to the intentions of the Wahabees, and operations having been abandoned, the fleet returned to Muscat. Soon after this a vessel of the Indian Navy, under instructions from the Government, who were desirous of promoting a reconciliation between Saeed and Hamed, proceeded to Sohar, and having received Hamed on board returned to Muscat, where a written engagement was entered into by the latter that he would not again rebel against Hilal bin Mohammed of Sowaik.

The Wali of Mombasa, Salim bin Ahmed, died in March, 1835, and his death was the signal for rivalry and dissensions between his brothers, Khamis and Nasir. After more than a year spent in contention the succession was obtained by Salim's son, Rashid.

A deputation from some of the tribes at Mombasa, tired of these wars and quarrels, found Saeed preparing a third expedition, and encouraged by this invitation he hastened his arrangements and sailed from Muscat in November, 1836, arriving at Mombasa about the close of the year. He at once summoned Rashid to surrender, but receiving no reply, Saeed landed his troops and batteries on the north side of the creek and commenced a bombardment. Taught by experience, however, of the futility of this method, he founded his hopes upon intrigue, and by lavish expenditure soon gained over a large proportion of those opposed to him, including Khamis and Nasir, the uncles of Rashid. Rashid, seeing the gradual deflection of his adherents, and finding himself unable to hold out against the

power of Saeed's purse, opened negotiations, and in February, 1837, a convention was concluded in the terms of the original pact, by which the fort was to be garrisoned by Saeed's men and the Wali was to reside in the town. Saeed then appointed Ali bin Munsoor to command the fort with a garrison of 500 men, and sailed for Zanzibar. Shortly after, at Saeed's invitation, Rashid paid a visit to Zanzibar, and was then offered the Waliship of Pemba, or a liberal pension, if he would relinquish his title and claim to the Waliship of Mombasa, and quit the place with his family for ever. Rashid declined the proffered baits and maintained his hereditary claim to Mombasa, and Saeed, failing in his attempt to get final possession of the coveted fort by purchase, devised a plan for the extermination of the family of the Mezini chief. Rashid was now honourably treated and sent back to Mombasa with presents, but two months later, Khalid, Saeed's second son, was despatched to that fort with secret orders, which he carried out with great precision and success. On arrival at Mombasa, where he was received with due respect, Khalid landed and held a durbar in Arab fashion at the fort gate. Rashid and the other Mezinis attended the levee, and on making their salutations were desired to enter the fort for the discussion of business. On passing in they were seized one by one and thrown into prison, to the number of thirty. Suspicions then arose, the alarm spread, and the remainder of the Mezinis fled to the mainland. The prisoners were immediately put on board and carried by Khalid to Zanzibar, whence Saeed shipped them to Bundar Abbas in one of his frigates. Some were thrown overboard on the way and the rest were immured and starved to death.

Saeed's wars at Mombasa had been marked throughout by a series of perfidies, and this cruel murder of the gallant Rashid and his companions fittingly completed his conquest. With their death the Mezini Dynasty, which had lasted for over a century, and which neither the Imam Ahmed nor any of his descendants had been able to overthrow by force of arms, came to an end.

The accession of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria was an opportunity for Saeed to display his loyalty to England, which was not

neglected by him. In 1838 he despatched Ali bin Nasir as envoy to offer his congratulations with presents of great value, and Captain Cogan, who brought back the mission to Zanzibar, was empowered to negotiate a commercial treaty, which was concluded and signed in May, 1839. Consequent on this treaty Captain Hamerton, of the Bombay army, was appointed Political Agent at Muscat in 1840, and in the following year sailed to Zanzibar, where he took up his residence. He was subsequently instructed to accompany His Highness on his return to Oman.

At this period (1838), it must be noted, Oman was visited by the indefatigable French traveller and botanist, M. Aucher Eloy, who arrived at Muscat in March, and after exploring Jebel Akhdar, returned to that port by the Wady Semail in the following April.

In 1838 the mind of the Indian Government was greatly exercised at the siege of Herat by the Persians, under the instigation of Count Simonovich, the Russian Envoy, and Lord Auckland ordered the Bombay Government to despatch a force to the Persian Gulf to make a counter demonstration. The steam frigate *Semiramis*, commanded by Captain Brucks, left Bombay with about 400 Sepoys and proceeded to Muscat, from whence, after a short stay, she steamed to Karrack, where she landed the troops under Colonel Sheriff; the steamer *Hugh Lindsay* subsequently brought reinforcements, and the force was supported by a squadron of ships of the Indian Navy, and the Persians appear to have been somewhat dismayed at the arrival of the British expedition. Orders were at once given for the city walls to be repaired, a work which was carried out with much haste; in September the Shah raised the siege of Herat and the force was then withdrawn.

Sometime in 1839 Saeed received letters from the Governor of Bourbon, who had been moved by representations from French merchants of commercial requirements at Zanzibar, requesting him to receive a French Consul on the same footing as the Americans, and making overtures for a fresh treaty. Saeed, however, demurred to granting an exequatur to the Consul, who had, in fact, already been appointed in anticipation, until the treaty had been concluded, and the appointment was consequently postponed.

Saeed returned from East Africa to Oman in September, 1839, and had no sooner arrived than he was forced to turn his attention to the adoption of measures for resisting the advance of the Egyptians. Mohammed Ali had at this time embarked on his vain career of aggression in Syria and Arabia, and his General, Khoorshid, had in December despatched Saeed bin Mutlak with a large force and two guns to Beraimi. There was reason to believe that Saeed had been engaged in a secret intrigue with Mohammed Ali for aid in obtaining possession of Bahrain in return for the payment of tribute to Egypt. But under the advice of the British Government Saeed dropped these schemes and evinced proofs of his determination to act loyally in accordance with the policy of the Government in opposing the invasion of the Egyptian troops. In one of his interviews with Mohammed Ali, in April, 1840, Colonel Hodges, the Consul-General at Cairo, desired explanations as to the object of the force under Saeed bin Mutlak ; professions of ignorance and evasions were at first resorted to, but the Pasha subsequently admitted that the force was part of Khoorshid's army, and was intended for the annexation of Oman ; he was then informed that the British Government would allow no interference on his part with Oman, and would punish any attempt at encroachment. A few months later, the vigorous measures taken by Lord Palmerston and the expulsion of Ibrahim Pasha and his troops from Syria by the combined English and Turkish forces, resulted in Mohammed Ali's evacuation of Arabia in 1840, whereby Oman was relieved from further danger in that direction.

In 1840 Captain Hamerton, who had been nominated as Political Agent at Muscat, was ordered to visit Al-Beraimi from Shargah, to take note of the Wahabee position. In 1841 he sailed for Zanzibar, and in the following year received instructions to accompany His Highness Seyyid Saeed when he returned to Oman.

The restless activity of the French in East African waters now greatly troubled the mind of Saeed, and writing to Lord Palmerston from Zanzibar, whither he had again proceeded in 1840, he did not conceal his fears that that nation had aggressive designs on his

mainland possession; Saeed's fears were probably not ill-founded. The brig *De Messager* was dispatched from Bourbon on three occasions to obtain concessions of various kinds, and other indications were not wanting to show that the French were anxious to obtain a footing on the coast, but Saeed had the sense and manliness to resist these demands and to decline to enter into any engagements against his interests. In his complaint, however, concerning the French occupation of Nosse Bé, which belonged, as he averred, to a Sakalava queen, who had put herself under his authority, Saeed was no doubt actuated by jealousy. He had probably not altogether withdrawn his gaze from that quarter and did not look on the French proceedings with equanimity.

Very soon after Saeed had sailed for Zanzibar, his rival, Hamed bin Azzan of Sohar, who, to show his loyalty and amicable feelings towards Saeed, had lately accompanied the latter on a tour of his possessions in the Gulf, seeing in his absence a good opportunity to make another move for the supreme power, set out for Bombay to solicit the neutrality of the Government in the forthcoming struggle. Though accorded a courteous reception in Bombay, the reply he received appears to have effectually discouraged him from further hostilities against Saeed; and soon after his return to Oman he retired from public life and assumed the garb of religion, appointing, at the suggestion of the Lady Moza, his son, Saif, Governor of Sohar, and the since famous priest, Al-Khalelee, Governor of Rostak. Hamed's ascetic habits were utilized by Khalelee to ferment an intrigue among the Batineh tribes, having for its object the election of Hamed as Imam, but it was not generally supported and fell through.

The situation of affairs at Bahrain in 1843, where civil war had broken out, revived Saeed's long cherished hopes of including that island in his dominions, and Thowaini began to make preparations at Muscat for an expedition. Before embarking on the enterprise, however, Saeed had the prudence to refer to the Indian Government for an expression of their views in the matter, and as it was considered desirable that Saeed should, for fear of bringing on complica-

tions with the Wahabees and Persians, preserve an attitude of neutrality, the scheme was abandoned by him.

Oman was at this time again threatened by its old enemies the Wahabees. The Ameer Faisal having made terms with Mohammed Ali and returned to Riadh, announced his intention of undertaking the conquest of Oman. Saeed bin Mutlak was despatched to Beraimi with a large force, and a demand was at the same time made upon Thowaini for 25,000 dollars. On receipt of this news the Resident of Bushire advised Thowaini to maintain a friendly understanding with the Wahabees, and to accept any terms compatible with his father's dignity. Thowaini at once requested a truce, desiring time to refer to Zanzibar for orders. Saeed bin Mutlak, however, notwithstanding his compliance with the request, immediately after marched into the Batineh and commenced hostilities. Remonstrances against this action were sent by the Resident to Faisal and to Saeed bin Mutlak, and this intervention, coupled with the fact that the Oman tribes were gathering in formidable numbers to oppose him, induced Saeed bin Mutlak to accept terms, and he eventually withdrew his forces for an annual tribute of 5,000 dollars, the authorization for which Thowaini had received from Zanzibar. The invasion thus terminated in a manner more favourable to Saeed than might have been expected. The increasing indifference to home affairs on Saeed's part was exemplified on this occasion by his not returning to guide his people in their defence against aggression; he was, moreover, exhausting his resources at this time in his campaign against the town of Siwi in East Africa. For this enterprise he had made extensive and costly preparations, and his force of 2,000 men was despatched in March, 1844, under the command of Hamed bin Ahmed al-Samar. It ended in a terrible disaster; the attack was badly planned, and the Arab army was routed and almost annihilated by the natives, who killed many of the leading Shaikhs, including the commander, and captured the whole of the artillery and stores; the remainder of the army fled back to Zanzibar, and His Highness never again attempted to interfere with Siwi, where he had already suffered so many reverses.

It was in this year that Saeed had the felicity to conclude his third treaty with a great Power. On November 4th, 1844, the French Commodore on the East Indian station, Captain Romain Desfossés, arrived at Zanzibar in the *Crocodile*, with a draft treaty of friendship and commerce. Saeed had previously communicated the proposals of the French Government in this matter to the English Foreign Office, and it was with the approval of the Secretary of State that he consented to negotiate. The treaty was signed on November 17th, and on the same day the first French Consul, who had been accommodated with a passage in the *Crocodile* by the Commodore, entered on his functions, although the treaty was not ratified until a year later.

The treaty was followed the next year by the despatch of a French surveying expedition to Madagascar and East African waters, under the command of Captain Guillain, who had visited those waters some years previously in command of the sloop *Dordogne*. This survey was carried out by him in the brig *Ducovedic*, 18 guns, during the years 1846–7, and his intelligent and zealous labours resulted in the acquisition of much valuable knowledge respecting the Zanzibar coast and its people. One of the chief objects of this enterprise appears to have been the acquisition of a strategical point on the mainland coast, that, like Mayotte, might act as a counterpoise to the new British settlement at Aden, and with this view Captain Guillain, about 1847, endeavoured to induce the native chiefs of Lamoo and Brava to sell those ports to the French Government. Saeed, however, to whom the ports belonged by conquest, had early news of the intrigue and was able to frustrate it.

It was at this time that Hilal, Saeed's eldest son, proceeded to England to beseech the intercession of Her Majesty's Government with his father, and it may be convenient here to turn aside from political events a little and glance at the relations in which Saeed stood towards his sons. Saeed's family now consisted of twelve, of whom the first was Hilal, who was born in 1815. He is described as tall, fair and handsome, noted for his courage and revered by the Arabs, who deemed him the most shrewd and energetic of all the

sons. He was so much a favourite that he would, it is said, have proved a very formidable rival to his father had he chosen to head a rebellion. The knowledge of this by Saeed had not improbably something to do with the continuance of that deep-rooted dislike and aversion which had been manifested towards Hilal from childhood. The estrangement continued to increase until Hilal's twenty-sixth year, when his father, having determined to disinherit him, recalled him from Burka, where he had been Wali for some years, to Zanzibar, and never again entrusted him with any position of authority.

In July, 1844, Saeed, with the express object of finding out whether he would be upheld in disinheriting Hilal, had written to Lord Aberdeen, saying that it was his wish that Thowaini should succeed him in Oman and Khalid in East Africa. The reply, however, was a diplomatic one, expressing hopes that Saeed would restore Hilal to favour. The supercession of Hilal by his father appointing Khalid to act as Regent at Zanzibar, and Thowaini at Muscat, during his absence from either place, was a cause of many quarrels, as Hilal was always insisting on the governorship of one or other of these capitals as being his by birthright, and indignant at length at what he considered his father's unjust treatment of him, he proceeded to England in September, 1845, to represent his condition to Her Majesty's Government. Having kept his father in ignorance of his intentions, Hilal was not afforded an official reception in London, but he seems to have gained much sympathy, and strong letters were written in his favour. Saeed, however, was exasperated by this visit and consequent exposure of his conduct, and though for a time more indulgent outwardly, became really more bitter in his dislike, and in November, 1849, Hilal was exiled from Zanzibar for ever. Hilal retired first to Lamoo, and thence moved on to Aden, where he arrived in a destitute condition. He had, however, long been in failing health, and disease accelerated by mental worry soon brought his life to an end. Surrounded by all his family his sad story closed on September 28th, 1851.

The causes of Saeed's hatred of his eldest son are obscure and

will probably ever remain so. Scandal rumoured that Hilal had violated his father's harem, but the story is doubtful, and it is more probable that the estrangement was due to harem intrigues and to jealousy, as Hilal's mother, an Abyssinian, died when he was an infant, while Khalid's mother was an especial favourite, and would naturally endeavour to prejudice her lord in favour of her own son. Khalid was born in 1819 of a Malabar concubine, who had great influence over Saeed, and did not scruple to use it ; he was of a mean and penurious disposition, and was much despised by the Arabs as he was petted and indulged by his father. His energies were entirely absorbed in trade, by which he amassed a large fortune, and on account of this he was generally known and spoken of as the "Banian." Saeed was very anxious that Khalid should succeed him, but fate decreed otherwise, and Khalid, after a long illness, died on November 7th, 1854. Two years younger than Khalid, and born of a Georgean mother, Thowaini was brave and generous, and much respected by the Arabs. He was greatly superior to Khalid, but could never have held his own against Hilal in Oman, and it was for this reason chiefly that the latter was recalled to Zanzibar in 1841. Saeed had much faith and confidence in Thowaini, and had publicly announced that he wished him to succeed as ruler at Muscat.

The next few years of Saeed's life were tolerably uneventful, and were spent in the relaxing climate of Zanzibar, where his sensual habits must have tended to unfit him for the active government of his Arab dominions. During his long residence in East Africa Saeed's main employment was to look after his estates and trading ventures and to continue to add to his already large and unwieldy navy.

Reverting now to affairs in Oman, we see that a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade was concluded by the Resident with Saif bin Hamed, Chief of Sohar, in June, 1849. Saif's position, however, was at this time very precarious, and the treaty never actually came into force. As previously stated, Hamed had some years before become a religious recluse and retired into Rostak

with the intriguing Metowwa Khalelee, leaving Sohar to Saif, who, though nominally independent, was held in check by a number of fanatical Metowwas or priests. Saif, finding his position intolerable, endeavoured to dispossess these priests, who had gradually usurped his authority, but failing to do so, was himself seized in the fort and, together with his uncle Kais, thrown into prison, where they remained for some time, while the priestly faction exercised full power over the town and district. Escaping from confinement, Saif called in the aid of Khatan bin Saif, Wali of Shinas, and having recaptured Sohar, rooted out the Metowwas and resumed sway over it.

Fully recognizing the power of the intriguing priests, Saif now made friends with Seyyid Thowaini, with a view to strengthening his position against them, but with Khalelee he was dealing with a foe as subtle and vindictive as St. Dunstan. Having obtained the reluctant consent of Hamed, who had long been inextricably in the toils of the religious party, Khalelee procured the assassination of Saif by the hand of one of the attendants, and Hamed was then induced to return to Sohar and resume the government. Partly in connection with the Joasmee designs on Shinas and Khor Fakan and also in obedience to orders from his father at Zanzibar to capture Sohar and seize Hamed, Thowaini despatched a force to the Batineh by land, whilst he himself proceeded thither by sea in the frigate *Faiz Allum*, in the beginning of 1850. On arrival at Sohar, Thowaini, under the mask of friendship, invited Hamed to renew the former treaty and to discuss plans for joint operations against the Wahabees; several interviews took place, and at one of these near Shinas, Hamed was suddenly seized and carried prisoner to Muscat, in the *Faiz Allum*, where he was confined for some time in Jelali fort and put to death on April 23rd, 1850, by starvation or poison.

The main purpose of Thowaini, under instructions from his father, had been to gain possession of Sohar, but in this enterprise he was foiled by the energy of Kais bin Azzan, who on the return of Thowaini to Sohar, in May, 1850, at once applied to Shaikh Sultan bin Sakar, the Joasmee, for assistance. Thowaini's siege operations were ineffective, and the combined efforts of Kais and the Joasmees

at length compelled Thowaini to raise the blockade and return to Muscat. Kais, moreover, succeeded in capturing Shinas, Khor Fakan, and Ghulla, but not content with this, he arrested Khatan bin Saif, who had been concerned in the seizure of Hamed, and cruelly murdered him by decapitation with a blunt sword.

The removal of the restless and ambitious Hamed from the scene was a great relief to H.H. Seyyid Saeed, especially as the religious party, at the head of which Hamed had put himself, was now gathering strength in Oman, and Thowaini received the unqualified approval and support of his father for his conduct of the matter. It was recognized throughout Oman, indeed, that Thowaini had acted in the true spirit of Arab policy, and it was believed, moreover, that the treachery had not been carried out without direct authority from Zanzibar.

On the news of these events reaching India, however, the action of Thowaini was viewed with disapprobation by the Government, his conduct towards Hamed being characterized as a violation of the treaty. Saeed, after much urging, at length realized the necessity of his presence in Oman, where he arrived on May 16th, 1851, and he at once began to prosecute war against Kais bin Azzan and the Joasmees. He moved first against Khaboora, which soon submitted, and then with little difficulty recaptured Shinas. Ultimately, deserted by the Joasmees, Kais made terms and retired to Rostak with a pension of 200 dollars monthly, Sohar being surrendered to Saeed, who thus for the second time became its unquestioned possessor. By his success in this campaign and his subsequent judicious arrangements with the leading Shaikhs and Chiefs of Oman, Saeed greatly increased his reputation, and his authority became more firmly established than it had been for many years previously.

Eager to be relieved from the cares of ruling his contentious people, His Highness set sail from Muscat in November, 1852, but the appearances of tranquillity were deceptive and his departure at this juncture was most inopportune; he had hardly quitted the shores when Thowaini was confronted by an unforeseen and formidable invasion.

A large Wahabee force under Abdulla, the son of the Ameer Faisal, appeared on the threshold of the country and re-occupied their former base at Beraimi, with the object of finally annexing Oman to the Nejdian Empire. Abdulla bin Faisal began by summoning the principal Chiefs and Shaikhs to his camp, and by demanding from Thowaini the surrender of Sohar and the payment of an exorbitant tribute. Alarmed at these terms, Thowaini moved up to Sohar to prepare for defence against aggression; meanwhile Captain Kemball, the Resident in the Gulf, at the request of Thowaini, proceeded to the Pirate coast in the Company's cruiser, *Clive*, and by his vigorous remonstrances induced Abdulla bin Faisal to alter his tone and abate his pretensions. An agreement was then come to, by which the Muscat Government was to pay an annual tribute of 12,000 dollars and arrears to the amount of 6,000 dollars, the Ameer's son binding himself to support Thowaini in all his political difficulties. In these negotiations the Resident had been much assisted by the firm stand made against the Ameer's son by Saood bin Tahnoon, Shaikh of the Beni Yas at Abu Thabee, who had refused to be intimidated by the Wahabees. In the latter part of 1853 Abdulla bin Faisal returned to Nejd, leaving Ahmed al-Sideyree in command of the force stationed in Oman territory.

Elated by his success against Kais, Saeed, on quitting his native country in 1852, had indulged the fond hope that he might be suffered to spend the remainder of his days in peace in the beautiful island he had chosen for his residence. His health and strength, it is said, had given way greatly in the last few years, and it was natural enough at his age and with his enfeebled constitution that he should seek repose. The recent invasion of the Wahabees and the offensive treatment of the Arab Governor of Bundar Abbas by the Persians, forced him to turn once more to Muscat. On April 15th, 1854, His Highness paid a visit to the Residency together with his principal officers, and placing the hand of his son Khalid in that of Colonel Hamerton, expressed a desire that the latter should remain at Zanzibar during his absence, and that he, Hamerton, would guide his son with advice in all doubts and difficulties, especially with

reference to foreign designs on his dominions, and Colonel Hamerton, having consented to comply with His Highness's wishes, received the homage of the Arabs present, in token of their loyal submission to their ruler's commands. Saeed then embarked on the *Victoria* frigate on the 18th, and sailed for Muscat, where he arrived some days later.

Two months after Saeed's departure, Captain Fremantle, of H.M.S. *Juno*, who had been sent on a mission to obtain the cession by purchase of the Kooria Mooria Islands, on which were valuable guano deposits, arrived at Zanzibar. The French had on several occasions endeavoured to get possession of the guano, but their negotiations had always failed. Captain Fremantle's efforts, however, were more successful. Having proceeded on to Muscat, he had no sooner intimated the desire of the Government to acquire the islands than Saeed, at once refusing the offer of purchase, agreed to their transfer, and made them over by a deed of gift dated July 14th, 1854

The hostile proceedings of the Persians at Bundar Abbas, who, under the belief that the town and strip of coast had been farmed to the Arabs on terms much too lenient, had insulted and expelled the old Governor, Saif bin Nebhan, and his garrison, and had resumed possession of the district, had greatly mortified and incensed His Highness, whose first attention was directed to the recovery of his rights. Having without loss of time equipped an expedition, he despatched it under Thowaini to Bundar Abbas, which was soon re-occupied. Fresh troops, however, were marched down from Shiraz, and reinforced by these, the Persian commander again expelled the Arabs, and Saeed, after an ineffectual blockade, was compelled to abandon the hope of recovering his supremacy over the Persian coast by force of arms. Negotiations were then opened, and a convention was eventually concluded in April, 1856, by which the lease was renewed to Saeed by the Shah for twenty years, at an increased rental of 16,000 tomans, under several stringent conditions, which were very derogatory to Saeed's pride. Unfavourable as the terms were, however, Saeed gladly accepted them rather than

relinquish the farm, and he at once re-took charge of Bundar Abbas and appointed a Wali and Customs farmer to resume control over the territory.

One of the first acts of Saeed on his arrival at Muscat had been to appoint his fifth son, Toorkee, as Wali of Sohar, a post which he continued to hold for some years.

At the time of Saeed's departure war had broken out between England and Persia in consequence of the Shah's designs on Herat, which was captured on October 25th. Lord Dalhousie's declaration of war was followed by the despatch of an armament from Bombay in November, 1856, and the naval commander, Admiral Sir H. Leeke, having embarked in the Company's frigate *Assaye*, arrived at Muscat in the same month and thence proceeded up the Gulf. Bushire and Mohammerah were soon after taken and occupied, and by the Treaty of Paris in March, 1857, Persia abandoned all claims to Herat and agreed to evacuate that fort.

His Highness Seyyid Saeed, finding his presence no longer urgently required in Oman, only remained there until the change of monsoon enabled him to turn his face southwards, and then, having appointed his son Thowaini his Deputy in Arabia, and taking leave of his aged mother, whom he never expected to see again, he set sail on September 15th, in the *Victoria* frigate, accompanied by the sloop *Artemise*, with his son Burgash on board. After touching at Soor to transact business, Saeed continued his journey, but on September 18th, was taken ill with swelling of the legs; he continued to grow gradually worse until October 13th, when dysentery set in, and on Sunday, the 19th, at 8.30 p.m., his life passed quietly away. The *Victoria* was passing Coctivi Island at the time, and six days after arrived off Chumba Island, in Zanzibar harbour, where she anchored with the *Artemise*.

The corpse was landed the same night, and in the presence of the sons and Arab notables was interred in the little cemetery near the palace, where a plain horizontal slab of white marble, without inscription, now marks the grave of Oman's famous prince. At the age of 66 years and 7 months, and after a reign of nearly 50 years,

Saeed thus closed a career which can only be described as remarkable. Left an orphan when a mere youth, his restless and enterprizing spirit urged him to step over a cousin's body to seize with avidity the reins of power, at a time when his country was harassed by foreign invaders and torn by internecine commotion. At such a time an abler and more experienced prince might well have shrunk from accepting the burden, but Saeed apparently felt himself equal to the position, and proved himself to be so.

In character Saeed was a worthy and typical example of the Arab race. He was very courageous, and on many occasions displayed exalted personal bravery. He was sagacious and shrewd, courteous and dignified, generous and magnanimous. But he possessed also the antagonistic qualities of the Arab, for he was too often vindictive and cruel, perfidious and covetous. He was beloved by all his people and was a man after their own heart. Saeed was admittedly unrivalled in the tact and discrimination he exhibited in dealing with the Arab tribes. His Highness can claim the distinction that he was the first Arab prince to effect the pacification of the East Coast of Africa, and that by his encouragement and protection of commerce, he made his capital the emporium of trade between India, Persia, and Arabia, and immensely increased the wealth of his country. Attracted by the equity of Saeed's government and the superior security of Muscat from piratical neighbours, these merchants soon flocked to the port, which thus became an important entrepôt.

The rapid development of East African commerce was due to his fostering care and protection, and the wisdom and foresight he displayed in this matter were rewarded by the increase of his revenue, which was mainly derived from Customs dces, which rose from 200,000 dollars, when he first assumed power, to five or six times that amount in his latter days. On nothing did Saeed lavish more money and attention than in acquiring ships and fitting them out as men-of-war. The largest vessel he ever possessed was the *Liverpool*, a two-decker of 74 guns, launched in 1826, which was presented by Saeed to the British Government, by whom it was

re-named the *Imam.* In 1847, when his navy was somewhat reduced, it is said to have consisted of nine frigates and corvettes, of which the largest was the *Shah Allum,* of 54 guns, and half a dozen sloops and brigs.

Saeed's relations with the British Government were from almost the commencement of his career of the most friendly description, and though this was, of course, in part the dictate of policy—for on several occasions his rule only escaped collapse by our intervention—yet he was unquestionably well disposed to us at heart ; and the son who has followed closest in his father's steps in this respect, Toorkee, has been heard to say that Saeed repeatedly counselled his children to stand at all times loyally by the British Government, and never to refuse any request that might be made by them.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF THE COMMERCE OF THE PERSIAN GULF.

THE history of the early colonization of Eastern Arabia and the trading intercourse of the people with foreign nations is plunged in obscurity, and our ideas concerning them must be necessarily based on conjecture and inference. From time immemorial the products of the ground were circulated among people in distant regions, and there seems to have been no bounds to this intercourse, as when history opens it was in full swing.

The propinquity of Oman to India and the commercial position of the Persian Gulf, which washes the shore of the earliest civilized countries, its incomparable position and its convenient ports and creeks for native craft, as well as its prolific fishing grounds, combined to make it a cradle of navigation, and the Omanis became the pioneers and chief carriers of commerce by sea in the Oriental World. The great feat of supplying the first link of commerce between the East and West was the work of the Cushites or Omani Arabs of that period.

The trade of the Arabian Sea must, in fact, have been coeval with the dawn of civilization. The early inhabitants of South and East Arabia were in all probability the first navigators of the Indian Ocean and the first to import Oriental produce to other parts. In the early days of their adventures on the sea they rowed from point to point, with timid and tentative efforts, along the shore in their small frail boats, beaching them for safety on the approach of bad weather. Taught by observation how to guide themselves by the stars the Arabs soon abandoned the primitive method of creeping

along the coast and boldly struck out for distant shores, being much facilitated by the monsoons.

The reason why Oman became less famous than the Yemen was because there was no direct communication by land between it and the West. If Oman had been in a more advantageous position to send caravans across Arabia herself; if, in short, she was as admirably placed by land, as she was by sea, there can be no doubt that she would, in those early times, have engaged the whole of the Oriental trade and would have become a most wealthy and powerful kingdom, but the great sand desert behind her was an almost insuperable barrier to communication by land, and in her isolated position she was impelled to take up the rôle of a commercial nation and to maintain the oversea traffic with India. But the predominant part taken by the Omanis in ancient navigation was never sufficiently recognized and passed gradually into oblivion, though they had done more than the peoples of India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia to develop and build up the important trade between the East and West. The most ancient indications we possess of this intercourse are in the monumental records of Nineveh, Babylon, and Egypt, which take us back to about 5,000 years B.C.

From the time the two earliest seats of civilization, Egypt and Mesopotamia, began to receive the valued products of India and the Far East, about 5,000 years B.C., the Arabs were the sole mediaries of commerce by sea, and the Indian commodities were carried up the Persian Gulf to the Euphrates for Babylon, and to Gherra or Kwait across the desert to Palestine and Egypt.

The mighty cities of the Tigris and Euphrates Valley, on the one hand, and the great cities of Egypt, Thebes, etc., on the other, were the recipients, demanders, and instigators of this traffic, which fed the luxurious and civilized inhabitants of those regions with spices, incense, etc., and enriched the Arabs. Incense for offerings in the temples, myrrh and spices for embalming the dead in Egypt were among the earliest items of trade, and were followed by precious stones, perfumes, and other things.

Herodotus tells us that the embalmers of the dead used the

finest bruised myrrh, cassia, and every kind of spice except frankincense in their art, and as mummies were embalmed at a very remote period the Indian and Arabian trade must have been at least of the same age.

Job, it seems, was not unacquainted with the Yemen, and allusions to trade and manufactures are to be found in his book. The Indian trade was in full vigour across Arabia to Egypt in the time of Abraham's travels and of Joseph's sale into Egypt. The latter's story proves a trade with India, as Arabia has no spices. The ancients had very hazy ideas as to the source of their precious Eastern wares and supposed that not only frankincense, myrrh, and balm, which do really come from Arabia, but also cassia, cinnamon, and other imported articles were indigenous there.

The first caravan on record was that to which Joseph was sold, conducted from Gherra to Gilead. Gherra from the earliest times carried on an extensive trade with the Phœnicians and with Petra, as well as with Babylon, in spices and in cotton, also with Bahrain where cotton had been early imported from India. Gherra was a place of active trade and as old a depôt as any in history, though it has left no architectural remains. Its merchants not only collected the precious commodities of the East but transported them to distant India.

It is probable that the Omanis may claim priority over all as navigators, but meanwhile we must not omit to mention the Phœnicians, a Cushite race, who migrated from Africa and travelled round Arabia to the Persian Gulf, resting on the way, probably in Oman, where they founded the town of Soor or Tyre, which was the original, and built long anterior to the Tyre in the Mediterranean. The names are identical, having the same spelling in Arabic, and the position of each on a rock is similar. From the Gulf the Phœnicians moved westwards towards the Mediterranean, where they are found at the dawn of authentic history. As Arabia was not only the sole medium through which the spices, precious stones and valuable fabrics were procured, and the Indian market reached, but also itself was the source of many important products, the Phœnician merchants found the peninsula a very lucrative field. The articles

disposed of by the Arabs to the Phœnicians are well known, but those received in exchange are matters of conjecture, probably manufactured goods and hardware, cotton and linen clothes, pottery, metal implements and utensils, beads and ornaments, toys and trinkets. Oman thus becoming rich by commerce would have gladly taken the beautiful jewellery, clothes, and metal work of Tyre and other refined elegancies. Pliny tells us that when the Phœnicians lived in their old abode, the Persian Gulf, they moved about from island to island by means of rafts. Herodotus says the Phœnicians freighted their ships in the Mediterranean with the wares of Egypt and Assyria, which shows that the wares of India were taken to Egypt and Assyria by the Arabs. They had, however, no ships or colonies in the Persian Gulf or Arabian Sea for certain and must have obtained most of their goods from Muscat Arabs at Gherra, or Teredon.

In the time of Moses trade with India was very brisk and the Phœnicians were pouring into Egypt the spices they had obtained from the Muscat Arabs.

Ur of the Chaldees, now known as Mugheir, was a strong and compact city on the right or west bank of the Euphrates, which was admirably placed for concentrating foreign merchandize in its bazaars. It had a great trade with the emporia of the Persian Gulf, and its commerce must have been co-extensive with the Empire of Babylon.

Eridu, being lower down, was better placed and absorbed much of the frankincense brought thither by the Omanis, while the merchants of Ur received pearls from Bahrain, diorite from Muscat, and incense from Dhofar and Guardafui.

The Muscat Arabs must have begun their maritime trade and dispersed it at a very early date. Eridu prospered by trade as it dominated South Chaldea, and its first king, Urbau, reigned 2900 B.C. At that time the country was highly civilized and must have been supplied by the Muscat and Bahrain Arabs with Indian goods.

Gherra was the most celebrated port in the Persian Gulf, but Muscat, Kais and Sohar were famous marts. At the time of King

Nebuchadnezzar the Phœnicians drew most of their Eastern trade from the Yemen by the Red Sea, and it was to counteract this and increase the wealth of his own dominions that he carried out greater public works and undertook military expeditions and built Teredon as a commercial depôt. Having thus encouraged the Persian Gulf route to Babylon, he attacked and ruined Tyre in 585 B.C., and tried to obstruct the trade route by Western Arabia. Gherra and its neighbours, Bahrain and Kateef, were more favourably situated as termini for the Oriental trade than the better harbours of Oman, as they were nearer to the great cities and marts of Syria and Mesopotamia, and the land routes from Oman were difficult and dangerous. They were the first places on the western shore suitable for depôts after entering the mouth of the Gulf, and it is thus easy to divine why they were selected. It is equally easy to discern how it was that Gherra became more notorious in the west than Muscat or Sohar, where foreign goods were largely landed and shipped. Gherra was not only nearer to the Levant but it was the mart of Greek and Phœnician merchants, who, of course, helped to spread its fame, while the other Arab ports, equally active and wealthy, perhaps, remained unknown.

Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets have drawn from the animal and vegetable productions of Arabia, and from the customs and manners of the Arabs, some of their most remarkable similes, allusions, and metaphors and most eloquent passages. Ezekiel's notion of Arabian geography is extremely vague and it is curious how he mixed up places. He mentions no place between Dedan and Kane, except Rameh, which is unknown. Ezekiel mentions gold as an article of trade from South Arabia, but it was no doubt imported from Africa and India, though Hamdani in the Iklil gives a list of gold mines in the Yemen. Frankincense was the chief export, most of which came from Somaliland, as very little was obtained from Dhofar. We know from the narratives about Abraham and Joseph in Genesis, that about 2000 B.C. caravans of merchants were in the habit of traversing Arabia to supply Syria and Egypt with spicery and merchandise, and we may safely infer that the system was of

ancient fashion and had been going on, perhaps, for thousands of years. There are no spices produced in Arabia, and the three indigenous articles she had to export, and with which she freighted her first caravans, were dates, frankincense, and pearls. One of the earliest caravan routes was doubtless that from Hadhramaut. The camels were loaded with frankincense and myrrh at the capital, probably Sabotha, and despatched in two directions, one by Mareb and Mecca to Edom and Egypt, and the other by Yemama to Gherra or Kateef, where it was joined by others and proceeded to Babylon. Arabia produced gold, ebony, precious stones, ivory and wrought iron. The ivory and ebony are not indigenous and come from India and Africa. The gold, silver, iron and gems possibly come from the Yemen. Steel probably came from India, as both the Yemen and Oman were famous for sword blades, spearheads and other steel arms. Maceta was a mart for cinnamon and similar articles. The staple of the spice trade, says Heeren, was probably Soor, and he adds that an emporium like this at the entrance of the Gulf strengthens our idea of an ancient Indian trade with the Oman coast. He thinks cinnamon was the sweet cane of Jeremiah, and took its name, doubtless, from Kane, as also did mace from Maceta.

The exports from Broach to Persia went in large ships and included copper and valuable woods, such as sandalwood, teak, blackwood, ebony, and aloe, the Omani Arabs carrying back in return pearls, wines, purple cloths, dates and slaves, the Arabs using small wooden boats sewn or tied together.

Though the antiquity of the Persian Gulf route exceeds that of the Red Sea by thousands of years, probably, the two lines afterwards became rivals and competitors, " soaring above each other alternately like Castor and Pollux," as Stanley says. The magnificently advantageous position of the Arabs, halfway from Egypt and India, allowed them to usurp the trade and become the first people to civilize the world, from their being the pioneers of navigation. This monopoly of the trade put it in their power to demand their own terms, and thus the power of acquiring great riches. The Persian Gulf route was well established before the trade crept along the South Arabian

coast to Hadhramaut and Aden and thence up the west coast of Arabia to Egypt and Syria.

The founding of Palmyra and other emporia by Solomon [?] was followed by a great development of traffic to Babylon and the Persian Gulf. Solomon made great efforts to encourage this trade, whilst the same time exploring the Red Sea line. This commerce flourished and the Muscat Arabs prospered, as the great carriers and intermediaries of Oriental commerce, until Nineveh fell before Cyaxares in 625 B.C. and Babylon before Cyrus in 559 B.C. During the 700 years that Palmyra was in its grandeur (1000–500 B.C.) the whole of Syria was intersected by a network of roads and overspread with serais or khans for the benefit of the Arab caravans.

After the great emporia on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates had come to know the nature and value of Indian and African products the Cushite Arabs of Southern and Eastern Arabia continued to supply them with the commodities of those regions, and a precarious trade was developed into a regular and systematic commerce, which remained in their exclusive possession probably for thousands of years, until the passage by the Red Sea was undertaken as a rival trade route to India by the Egyptians. Though a small portion of the Indian traffic had no doubt been carried on up the Red Sea for centuries previously, it was not until about 500 years B.C. that the Red Sea route began seriously to compete with the Persian Gulf Channel, this traffic of the Egyptians, Jews, and Phœnicians being only intermittent and spasmodic on account of the dangers on the way.

In treating of the great commerce which existed in ancient times between the East and West, a most important part must be assigned to the caravan routes, which intersected Arabia in all directions and performed a most indispensable service to the merchants. Arabia was beyond all countries the land for caravans, and whether the intercourse was up the Persian Gulf or by way of Aden and Kane the ship of the desert was absolutely indispensable for the transport of the merchandize. The chief roads must be described in detail. Palmyra, Petra, Aden, Moosa, Kane, Dhofar, Sabota, Sanaa, Mareb, Soor,

Muscat, Sohar, Gherra, Kwait, and Babylon, were among the chief depôts and emporia of the Indian trade, where immense numbers of merchants, slave dealers, travellers, buyers, agents, peddlers, etc., congregated to traffic and procure the much-prized luxuries and curiosities of India. The caravan was under the command of the Ameer or Captain, who, with his subordinate, guided and arranged camps and controlled the movements of the travellers, and whose word was law. The organization was quite complete in itself and carried its own food. Except on lines of route where water was abundant, the caravans were made up in small parties and if the merchandize to be transferred was in a large quantity the caravans followed in quick succession, as it was dangerous to send large companies where water was precarious, but on some lines a caravan would comprise many thousands of travellers and camels. Strong escorts were rarely needed in Arabia ; in dealing with the question of protection against human foes there were two methods then as there are now. One was by subsidizing the predatory tribes ; the other was by placing the caravan under the protection and tutelage of one or more strong powerful tribes, who had the power and authority to conduct it in safety, and who received their compensation in the hire of the camels which they had the right to provide. The post of captain of caravans was, however, an onerous and perilous one, and for so weighty a responsibility it was necessary to select a man fully responsible for the care of the lives and property of so many of his fellow creatures. The caravans had regular places of rest and refreshment in the wadies and it was the business of the captain's officers to select encampments with sufficient water, dates, wood, herbage, etc.

Sketch of Arab Trade.

It was in the time of the Emperor Heraclius that the prophet Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, and the world soon became acquainted with the fact that the Arabs had arisen as a conquering race to spread the new faith, to subdue the surrounding nations, and to lay the foundations of a new empire and civilization. One of the

earliest results of the movement was to change the course of trade between the East and West back into its oldest and most legitimate channel—the Persian Gulf—and to Mohammed must we give the wisdom to encourage commerce and who preached it as a religious duty in the Koran. Damascus became the new entrepôt of Syria, while in Mesopotamia, Koofa and Wasit, Busra and Rai, Mosul and Hamadan, Ispahan and Shiraz became great commercial centres and depôts. Commerce, however, did not rise to its full volume all at once; the Arabs were too much engaged in conquest, and the clash of arms was too great to give them leisure for this pursuit; but as the seat of government changed from place to place, from Medina to Damascus, from Damascus to Koofa, from Koofa to Baghdad, a number of magnificent cities sprang up in every direction, and their splendid bazaars soon encouraged and extended commerce, which throve and multiplied amazingly. Baghdad was founded in 144 A.H. [A.D. 761], on the west bank by the Khalif Mansoor on a site selected by Nebuchadnezzar, but his son, afterwards the Khalif Mahdi, soon started the city on the east bank, which in time surpassed that on the west. It was called Medinat al-Salaam, because it had been prophesied that no Khalif would die within its walls, and very curiously thirty-seven died outside of it, while from the time of Mansoor science and literature flourished. The Arabs turned their attention to everything, and Mamoon's translation from the Greek gave a great impulse to study, and the glory of this epoch vied with and surpassed the brightest days of Greece and Rome. As Humbolt says, "Their unexampled intellectual activity made a distinct epoch in the history of the world."

The Arab merchants and agents eagerly sought curiosities and objects of antiquity, books, etc., for presentation to the Khalifs. Others, either merchants or travellers, obeyed the injunction of the Prophet, and wandered from country to country to improve their knowledge. "At the time when Europe believed in the flatness of the earth and was ready to burn those who had views of their own, the Arabs were teaching geography by the use of the globes." The progress of the Arabs in the arts of civilization and the glorious pur-

suits of science was as rapid and astonishing as their military conquests and their maritime exploration and commerce.

To the Arab is due the originality and courage of facing the appalling dangers of the vast unknown and of pushing maritime discovery and exploration to the very confines of the terrestrial globe, thus making commerce co-extensive with the limits of the three colligated continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The earliest notice we have in Arab literature of the maritime supremacy and predatory instincts of the Muscat Arabs is in the Koran Soora, "The Cave." The king here alluded to is supposed by some commentators to be Julanda bin Kerker or Minmar bin Julanda, one of the Julanda family of Azdites then ruling in Oman. Beidhawi and others were probably acquainted with the same tradition and legend as related by Mohammed and were well aware that the event took place in Oman. There is thus no reason to doubt that Beidhawi's ascription of it to Oman had a sound basis; the story shows that the Muscat Arabs were strong at sea before Islam and that they had no naval rivals to fear.

The reduction of Egypt in A.D. 630 gave Alexandria up to pillage, dispossessing the Greeks of their Indian trade, and struck a mortal blow at the Red Sea line, which for a time was almost completely closed by the Arabs. The Greek and Byzantine merchants were for a time ruined, and Omar, still further to establish the sea traffic of the Persian Gulf, founded Busra in the Shat al-Arab in A.H. 15 [A.D. 636]. This town soon attracted settlers from all parts of Arabia; Koofa, which was founded about the same time, rising in the same manner, and followed it up by naval expeditions from Muscat, and Sohar to the Bombay coast, Tanna, and the mouth of the Indus, although it is true that these attempts were not so much mercenary as religious and political.

Four years after founding Busra, Omar sent Saeed to Persia, and after the Battle of Cadesia, in which the Sassanian monarch was routed, that general laid siege to the walled cities of Media and carried them by storm. The plunder of these rich and magnificent cities enriched the Arabs beyond their most avaricious dreams and

opened their eyes to the extent, variety, and costliness of the Persian Gulf trade with India.

In the time of the Khalif Waleed the governor, Hejaj, sent an expedition against Sind (A.D. 712) to avenge an insult to Moslem pilgrims, and the success of this incited the warlike and commercial Arabs to further efforts both in conquest and trade. From this time rapid strides were made by the Muscat and Busra Arabs, the former of whom had never ceased to continue trading operations with India, in extending commercial intercourse, and colonies soon sprang up at Malabar, Ceylon, the Eastern Islands, and China, and details of this commerce are to be found in the Arab writers.

The Arab rulers soon perceived the great importance of the Indian trade, and following the system of the Sassânians, only with much greater spirit and energy, encouraged the merchants and seamen to proceed beyond their former bounds, and to bring the products of China direct to the markets of the Persian Gulf, and the richer and rarer articles were thus landed in Arab and Chinese ships at Sohar and Busra at a far cheaper rate than had ever been known before. By this the Persian Gulf thus became the seat of a great maritime commerce, and as the Khalif now held all the highways of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, etc., the traffic thus far exceeded probably that of Alexandria or Tyre at the height of their glory.

Before the ninth century the Muscat Arabs were again trading at Canton, and not a few trading agents and shipowners had settled at Siam as well as Java, Sumatra, and other islands. As the Arab merchants took native wives and formed harems, their language was soon introduced and became the *lingua franca* of all the intervening ports between Muscat and China, and one of the chief articles sent and taken to China in those days, as it is at present, was shark fins for soup; they also took pearls, carpets, gems, and woollen cloths, bringing back silks, porcelain and Chinese girls.

The Arabs' boldness and enterprise had a remarkable effect on the hitherto exclusive and apathetic Chinese, who built sea-going junks, and shipping their own commodities followed up the Arabs to their own homes and landed cargoes at Siraf and Muscat where

they had an anchorage long called Moculla Chini; previous to this time they had not ventured further west than Ceylon, but they now weathered Cape Comorin, and the more adventurous even sailed up to Busra. The Chinese rebellion, however, of 264 A.H. [A.D. 877] put an end to the Chinese vessels coming to Muscat and to the Muscatis going to Canton, and thenceforward for some time the Arabs and Chinese met at Ceylon.

In the time of Al-Mutazz, 252–256 A.H. [A.D. 866–69] the Arabs investigated the subject of commerce scientifically and wrote many books upon it. Jahiz, who died in 255 A.H. [A.D. 868] composed the "Nadir fi al-Tajarah," which is lost, and Al-Madaini wrote another. The desire of travel followed the progress of civilization, and both geography and commerce were much advanced, while moollas, literary men, historians like Masoodi travelled from place to place, often combining the business of merchants, and while exchanging the products of the different climates of the vast empire exchanged also ideas and knowledge on all topics. The Arabs in their voyages show much skill and daring, while it is possible that they had astrolabes, which had come from the Greeks, and could take latitudes roughly, and their knowledge of Eastern geography was perhaps better than we imagine, but their great treatise on the subject, the "Rasm al-Ardh," is lost.

The Arabs simplified cosmography by dividing the Indian Ocean into seven seas. They called the first (their own sea, the Persian Gulf) Bahr Faris, in which lay five ports of great fame: Busra, Bahrain, Siraf, Sohar, and Muscat. From Busra or Siraf the first stage sailed by the ship was to Muscat in Oman, at the south end of the Gulf, and from thence started on her voyage in the second sea, Larewi, which is the Arabian Sea or north part of the Indian Ocean. The next stage was to Kosham Mali, and from this port they voyaged for a month, when they arrived at the Nicobar Islands—from Ceylon to the Nicobar and Andaman Islands the sea was called Hor Kand. From the Andamans they sailed to Kalah (Kalahbar), the great Malaccan port and mart which Abul Feda, 732 A.H. [A.D. 1331], indicates as the chief emporium between Muscat and China, and where

many foreign traders—Arabs, Chinese, Persians, and Indians—resided. It belonged to Java or Zabej ; Java was very wealthy and had a large population. The position of the fourth sea (Shalahat) is confused and not easy to determine and so is the fifth sea, Kidrong. The sixth sea (Sunf) was beyond Cochin China and included the Gulf of Tonquin. It was divided from the seventh sea (Saiji) by the Straits of Hainan, the gate of China. The sea of Saiji was that on the east coast of China, in which were many ports, especially the Arabo-Chinese one called Gampoo, or Khongee, celebrated by Arab authors and which was known in the Middle Ages as Khansa or Quensai and which is now known as Hangchen fu

That the Arabs traded very largely in the Indian and Chinese commodities, and that they far surpassed all others in these operations is beyond question. Nearly the whole of these Eastern products were poured into Mesopotamia, Syria and Persia, as the Christian nations were now cut off from any participation in the trade by the hostile and jealous Arabs, whose harems demanded and absorbed all the merchants could bring, and who could spare nothing for others.

The early Abbasides built Baghdad, which soon became one of the greatest and wealthiest cities in the world, and here Mansoor patronized literature and raised Arab civilization to a higher pitch than existed anywhere else in those times. The extraordinary magnificence, pomp, and luxury of some of the Khalifs of Baghdad show what a brisk commerce there was then, and what an inundation of foreign produce must have been poured into the capital. The splendour and opulence of Baghdad would be best shown in the marvellous richness of clothing and jewellery lavished on the women, their gorgeous dresses, scarves, girdles, gold and silver embroidered clothes, silken raiments, finery, trinkets, ornaments, gold and silver vessels, china and porcelain vessels, and many things of the greatest beauty and curiosity were displayed in the harems of the rich. Islam sent out slave merchants who penetrated to Denmark in the north, Spain in the west, China in the east, and Africa and Madagascar in the south, ransacking the whole world for female slaves, interpreting the Koran's attitude towards infidels as an order to " Put the men to

the sword and their women in your harems." Khordadbeh describes the routes taken by the Jewish slave-dealers to Baghdad and India. Many European girls were thus transported to Eastern harems, either by the Red Sea, by Aleppo, and the Euphrates, and by Syria to Baghdad, through Arabia on to India, but the girls, it is certain, never passed the Persians or Arabs. In Denmark, where northern slave-girls were purchased, gold dinars of Baghdad have been found in plenty. Warsae says that the immense quantity of Arab coins and silver ornaments found recently on the Baltic coast and in England, etc., shows that a most extensive trade with Arabia must have taken place in the eighth and tenth centuries of our era. In the Stockholm Museum there are more than 20,000 coins, minted at about seventy towns in the north and east of the Arab Empire, and more than three-fourths struck in the ninth and tenth centuries. Gothland, in particular, appears to have been the great slave market and the seat of a very lively trade. The road generally taken by the Arab traders with their white slaves, after leaving Visby, was along the Russian rivers to the Caspian Sea and Baghdad. The extraordinary activity of this traffic is proved by the mention of it in the sagas and in Arab literature. The Vikings and Danes were not only warriors, they were also active traders, and brought their own and Arab wares in the vessels to England.

As the Arabs were intent on procuring the luxuries and valuables of India and China for themselves, the Greek and Roman merchants were at their wits' end to find sufficient merchandize to satisfy the cravings of European luxury and refinement, and the price of silks, pearls, and other precious commodities rose to a fabulous height at Rome and Constantinople. The high prices were a great incentive to enterprizing merchants, who began to seek out new routes for the Indian trade. Alexandria was now under Moslem rule, who put such heavy customs dues and other exactions on the Christian traders that they had to overcome obstacles and seek alternative routes. A caravan route was organized from Constantinople to the Caspian, thence to the Oxus, and so on to the Indus, and back by the same route, but even this had to pass through Moslem territory, with

hostile tariffs, and in face of constant wars and dynastic struggles was very precarious, as were other similar routes exploited and laid open by traders in the greed of gain. This traffic overland made Christian Constantinople the rival of Moslem Alexandria, and the former became for a time the great mart for European merchants in Indian goods, gradually absorbing the chief part of the merchandize by the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and overland routes.

The splendour, too, of Arab luxury and opulence gave an immense impetus to the commerce and refinement of the nations on the northern shore of the Mediterranean.

To the eastward Balkh, Nishapoor, Merv, Herat, and Samarcand grew wealthy by commerce, which was fully protected by the Arab rulers in a way unknown before. Industry and manufactures flourished, the productions of the smaller towns was collected by merchants for sale in the cities, and so trade increased and merchants were honoured. The great pilgrim caravan to Mecca also helped trade, and Mecca became large and rich ; it was a great rendezvous where the Mohammedans of Eastern Asia and Africa met together. Furthermore, the Crusades had an enormous influence in promoting and developing the civilization of Europe, in making the eastern and western nations acquainted with each other, in increasing and disseminating knowledge, in removing prejudice, in teaching one to respect the other, and in forming mutual friendships.

The Arab is trained from early youth in the observations of the stars, and soon learns to find his way by their unerring guidance over the pathless desert and the trackless sea. In the pure clear atmosphere of these regions the stars that shine so brilliantly are truly invaluable in enabling him to direct his nightly course, and he never deviated from it while crossing the broad ocean, as he had but to maintain during the day the direction he had fixed during the night. It seems to be generally admitted now that the honour of the discovery of the mariner's compass is due to the Arabs, who at the time it is first mentioned were the masters of Europe in science and art. The first definite mention of it is in two books in the twelfth century. In the first it is said that sailors use a needle which, when to assume its

own position on water shows them their course when the North Star is invisible. If the compass had been invented by the Europeans we should unquestionably have heard all about the invention, but as it was derived from the Arabs through mercantile and marine intercourse its origin has remained obscure. Primarily it was used, not for the benefit of the mariner, but for what was much more important in Moslem eyes, the true direction of the Kibla, to which they turned in prayer, and one of its commonest titles still is the " Kibla Numa." Not one of its Persian names has any reference to its value to seamen.

When the astonishing progress made by the Arabs in science is remembered, their invention of algebra, spherical trigonometry, quadratic equations, sines and cosines, etc., and their advance in optics, mechanics, and mathematical geography, it is not surprising that they should have discovered the magnetic needle, and the foundation of the physical sciences is ascribed by Humbolt to the Arabs, especially chemistry. To the Arab belongs the honour of having invented paper and gunpowder as well as the compass, and as they taught the Chinese the use of coins, so they taught the Western nations the three or four remarkable discoveries which have gone far to spread literature, to revolutionize the art of war, and to enable us to discover and map out the world by the compass ; it is probable that they also invented clocks. Silk paper was first made at Samarcand and Bukhara in 30 A.H. [A.D. 650], but in Spain paper was made of linen and hemp, and is mentioned by Idrisi as made at Shativa, and in the thirteenth century of our era Arab paper had reached France, England, Germany and Italy. Arab manuscripts were imported and admired for the beauty and splendour of the paper ; in those days the Arabs were ahead of Europe and have been our masters in many things. In the mechanical arts the Arabs were famous in the world as carvers, cutlers, founders, tanners, and weavers. Their coats-of-mail, sword blades, their carpets and woollen stuffs, of which the modern cashmeres are only an imitation, were quite unequalled in Europe.

The Persians have always been celebrated for their industries

and highly artistic manufactures, the exquisite taste and beauty of some of their work being surpassed by no other nation, ancient or modern, silk and cotton cloths, enamelled gold and silver and copper ware, china and glass, gold and silver brocade, arms and armour, fine woollen shawls and carpets, gold and silver ornaments.

With Africa everything was done by barter, not with coin as with other countries. With that country cotton cloths, girdles, salt, silver, and brass were given in exchange for ivory, slaves, cowries, etc. Baghdad paid for most foreign articles in cash (which was plentiful), but had also many manufactured things to dispose of—cotton and woollen cloths of sorts, Baghdad carpets, and glass made at Kadesiyeh in Mesopotamia, etc.; the striped cloths of Yemen, the frankincense of Hadhramaut, and the embroideries of Oman, were much in request. Sail and tent cloths of Bahrain were famous, Fars exported woollen cloths, and Obolla turbans, while Egypt exported the papyrus reed for paper, and it may be mentioned that muslin took its name from Mosul, damask from Damascus, and calico from Calicut.

The demands of the wealthy and luxurious led to a great many new fabrics and articles being invented and made, and encouraged industry, but merchants were not permitted to export the celebrated Arab swords. The embroideries were a special trade and were mostly in the hands of the Persians, who often depicted figures and scenes like tapestry. The entire property in the palace of the Khalif Mustansir in 656 A.H. [A.D. 1258] was sold by the Turks, and was, perhaps, the greatest auction scene the world has ever witnessed. Here were sold 1,000 silk carpets, representing as many kings of different countries, and on one huge silk piece of stuff were portrayed all the countries of the world with their physical features and names of cities in gold and silver.

The city of Baghdad, the capital of the Empire, was in the ninth century of our era the centre of commerce and the mercantile emporium for all parts of the world. Its merchants had trade relations with the most distant countries and its spacious and extensive bazaars were the greatest repositories of varied merchan-

dize in Asia. The aspect of an Oriental bazaar has been too often described to need repetition and the pages of the *Arabian Nights* convey a faithful picture of the Baghdad society of that period, giving us a clear insight into the character of the trade in the city of the Khalifs. The shops of the attar—druggists or perfumers—were filled with Eastern *materia medica* and loaded the air with the fragrance of spices from the Archipelago—the odoriferous ambergris, frankincense, aloes, wood, myrrh, rose-oil, musk, etc., regaling the sense of smell with a blend of aromatic odours. The cloth merchants displayed the silks of India, China and Persia, the muslins of India, the cotton fabrics of Oman and Yemen, and the brocades and tissues of Persia. The jeweller could show the pearls of Al-Bahrain, the precious stones of Seremdeb or Ceylon, the diamonds of Golconda, and the rubies of Burmah and Badakshan; other shops had the porcelain of China, the shawls of Cashmere, the manufactures of India, the carpets of Persia, the ivory of Africa and India and the gums of Adel.

We may fairly suppose that the bazaars of Eastern cities in the early days of Islam presented much the same appearance as they do now, being filled with bustling crowds and streams of brightly and gaudily costumed human beings of various hues and of the most heterogeneous description. Itinerant vendors, water-carriers, camels, asses with water-skins, mules, customers, slaves (black and white), shaikhs on horseback, sellers, buyers, soldiers, etc., all mixed together in a jostling, hustling, hurrying throng, passing before the eye in the dark narrow passages of the extensive and vaulted bazaar, such as at Baghdad, Busra, Siraf or Sohar, Mosul or Damascus. Every nation, race, and religion has its own distinctive and characteristic dress and appearance, and a stranger must have been bewildered at the ever-changing and curious scent. No doubt the shopkeeper then as now sat motionless and dignified in his stall, silently exhibiting his wares, and asking, as he does at this day, a much higher price than he expects to get. Courteous and obliging he produced what you wanted without comment and did not pester you with anything about the next article.

It was the universal belief among the Arabs that in the Indian Ocean were one or more huge loadstone rocks under the sea, which has so strong a magnetic attraction for iron articles floating on the surface that a ship fastened with iron nails would, on sailing over it, be sure to be drawn down to the bottom, or the nails dragged out and the vessel go to pieces.

It is supposed that the story of the loadstone at the bottom of the sea, which drew the nails out of ships, was the cause of Eastern vessels being sewn with cordage, a story which the Arabs learnt from the Chinese, but I believe that the cause was different, and that Indian and Arab ships were built in this way perhaps thousands of years before maritime intercourse with China began. It was, no doubt, introduced to give the sides and timbers of the ship more play, as there is a much greater strain on a bughla, with its single huge lateen sail, than on a European sailing ship.

This story was carried to Europe during the Crusades and is found in a Latin poem, according to Yule. If this myth emanated from China it is obvious that the locality of the loadstone would be in that sea, and that the Arabs would not have constructed their vessels, navigating the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Indian Ocean, expressly to meet a danger that only existed in China, several thousand miles away to the east. The loadstone myth as the cause of ships being sewn together instead of nailed must be given up as absurd.

CHAPTER VII.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE PEARL FISHERIES.

ARABIA was divided by the older Greek writers, who produced works on geography into two parts, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, while Claudius Ptolemy, the last and greatest, about a century after Christ, added a third division, which he called Arabia Petraea. By the term Felix the Greeks apparently intended to include all that part of the Arabian peninsula lying southward of a line drawn from the Gulf of Akabar to the Persian Gulf. It is clear, however, that their information regarding the configuration of the coast line, as well as the physical features of the interior, was extremely vague and confused, and it is problematical whether they knew of the existence of the great sandy desert known as the Roba al-Khali, which covers nearly half of the entire peninsula, and we may assume that they referred only to the provinces with which they were best acquainted, namely, Al-Hejaz, Al-Yemen, Hadhramaut, and Oman. Of these provinces by far the best known to them was Al-Yemen, to which the name of Arabia Felix has been more particularly applied, and in this restricted sense the epithet is not only very appropriate but has survived to the present day. At the same time it may be remarked that the term is not a translation of Al-Yemen, which means " Right Hand," but is a rendering of the word Al-Khadhr, " The Green or Fertile," by which the Arabs sometimes designate it.

Originally, no doubt, the four divisions of Arabia Felix were separated from each other, partly from geographical and partly from political considerations. The boundaries of three, Al-Hejaz, Al-Yemen, and Hadhramaut, remain indeterminate to the present day.

but the last of the four divisions mentioned above is the one with which we are now concerned, viz., Oman, which lies contiguous to, and conterminous with Hadhramaut to the eastward, but the point on the coast at which contact takes place has varied in different ages.

Most of the classic authorities agree in making Hadhramaut end at Cape Suagros or Ras Fartak, and place the frankincense region in Oman, but Ptolemy appears to prefer locating the limit of Hadhramaut at the Island of Serapis or Maseera, thereby meaning probably the Wady Halfain, which debouches near Mahot, though it must be noted that he rather inconsistently places the Moon Bay (Ghubbet al-Kamar) in Oman.

From the time of Ptolemy our knowledge of this part of Arabia is overspread by an almost impenetrable veil which is not uplifted until the early centuries of Islam, when the Arab geographers begin to throw light upon the subject; their accounts, however, are unfortunately very lax and discrepant, and it is difficult to derive any precise data for ascertaining the limits of Hadhramaut toward Oman.

Many of the Arab geographers consider these limits as coincident with the extension of the great Mahra tribe towards the east, but as they give no indication as to the spread of this tribe they leave the question practically unsolved. The Mahras have for centuries roamed the desert to the north and east of the Samhan (or Crescent) range, and some may have occasionally wandered into Oman, as far east as the Meridian of Ras Jezaniyya or Showamiyya, but do not appear to have ever touched the coast further east than Ras Ahmar. Ibn Haik al-Hamdany, who died 348 A.H. [A.D. 959], wrote a valuable description of Arabia but does not inform us much on this point. Mukuddasi, the author of the best geographical work in Arabia, and who wrote about half a century later, puts the boundary at Dhofar, as does also Abul Feda. Al-Bekri, a native of Spain, who died in A.D. 1094 makes Hasek (meaning thereby the Wady Rekot) the boundary of Oman, and thus includes Dhofar in Hadhramaut. Edrisi seems to follow Al-Bekri in excluding the Mahras from Oman, while Ibn Mojawi, who travelled much in South Arabia, plainly

considers Dhofar as pertaining to Oman. Yakoot tells us that in his time Dhofar was subject to Bahrain. We may therefore conclude that the fertile and interesting little district of Dhofar, of which we shall speak more particularly further on, has ever been under the dominion of Oman, with a few short intervals of independence, or of subjection, to other powers such as the Yemen, Persia, and Al-Bahrain. The limits of the coast are, however, no longer vague and uncertain, as it extends to Ras Shajr, and may be said to embrace geographically, if not politically, that part of the peninsula eastward of an imaginary line drawn from Ras Shajr across the desert to the Sabkheh Matta, and bounded on all other sides by the sea. Under this view we see that Oman occupies that portion of the peninsula which, projecting towards the east, interferes with the symmetry of its quadrilateral shape and may cover an area of about 150,000 square miles. By some Oman has been restricted to the mountainous region only, but more correctly the appellation bears the wider signification described above. Stretching away to the westward the great sandy desert forms an almost insurmountable natural barrier to political and commercial intercourse, isolating Oman as if it were an island and giving it a unique position in Arabia. The most remarkable physical feature of the country, the one which demands our first attention, is the long mountain chain, extending from end to end, forming the backbone of the land, which presents a strange contrast to the desert behind. An accurate knowledge and examination of this chain is needful to understand adequately the disposition of the provinces, the natural features of Oman, and the highways by which the Arabs hold intercourse with each other. This chain begins at Cape Mussendom, where the peaks rise to a height of over 6,000 feet and trend thence in a south-easterly direction at a depressed elevation to Jebel Akhdar, or "The Green Mountains," which forms the culmination of the range. At this point the chain becomes somewhat complicated, and the grand cluster of Jebel Akhdar radiates out into several spurs, while the chain continues in a north-easterly direction to Kuriyat, where it begins to approach the sea and thence on to

Ras al-Had. The whole of this range is, by reason of its geological formation, characterized by aridity, the more elevated parts especially being very scantily clothed with verdure, intersected by fertile and well-peopled valleys and narrow defiles, which provides copious springs and streams to irrigate the maritime plains. From the watershed of this range the natural drainage falls into three basins, viz., the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Bahr al-Hadhri or Arabian Sea. These watercourses are often dry and afford but intermittent pools of water and only reach the sea after heavy rainfall. A few of the large ones are perennial, but whether torrents or rivers they are all indiscriminately called wadies, while they offer the same characteristics as those found in other parts of Arabia and form the chief channels of communication throughout the land. Being studded, moreover, along their course with towns, villages, forts, and watch-towers they contain a large portion of the population, each valley being known generally by the name of the tribe inhabiting it.

The provinces into which Oman has been divided by its inhabitants, since ancient times, are eight in number, and have been determined by geographical considerations according to the contour of the land. The boundaries of these divisions cannot be stated with certainty, even their numbers are matters of dispute, and the most experienced Shaikhs are not always in agreement on this point, as the Arab mind is not remarkable for accuracy and precision of detail, but the broad features are well known. The primitive and patriarchal system of the Arabs, under which each tribe protects its own interests, is fraught with political weakness and disunion, and does not necessitate the division of the country into sections, as no organization for the purpose of facilitating the administration exists, and the only object that this separation of the land into provinces seems to serve is that it assists the tribes residing therein to combine together to resist foreign aggression in troublous times. Of the eight divisions, the five most important are in the mountainous region and are as follows: Al-Shemal, Al-Batineh, Al-Dhahireh, Oman Proper, and Al-Sharkiya. To these some add a sixth

division, namely, Al-Jabaliyeh, or the hill ranges, but this seems to be incorrect, confusing, and superfluous. The three other divisions are Al-Gharbiyeh, Jafoor (or the desert), and Dhofar. In the absence of a scientific survey, these boundaries of the provinces can never be accurately determined, but it may be as well to give here a short description of each division as the result of personal observation.

The SHEMAL, as its name implies, is the northern province and includes all that extent of territory to the north-west of a line drawn from Ras Mallaha along the base of the hills to the Wady Jezzi and Beraimi and thence to Abu Thubi, and on the other side it is bounded by the sea. The Shemal, though covering a large tract of country, is so hilly and sterile that it is very unproductive, but owing to its advantageous position as regards the pearl banks and sea fisheries has a strong and thriving population. Cape Mussendom, known to the Arabs as Roos al-Jabel, consists of black rocks of very singular contour and precipitous down to the sea. It is greatly indented with coves and inlets, two of which form land-locked harbours of great capacity, known as Elphinstone and Malcolm Inlets.

The two highest peaks are Jebel Hareen and Jebel Kewi, rising to 6,700 and 5,800 feet respectively. On the western side of the promontory the hills begin to recede from the sea near Khasab and form the maritime plain called by Europeans the Pirate Coast, but known to the Arabs as Al-Sirr or Al-Shemal. This northern province is held by three independent powers, the Sultan of Muscat, the Shaikh of the Joasmees, or more properly the Kowasina, and the Shaikh of the Beni Yas, but the two latter, since the retirement of the Wahabees, own no allegiance to the ruler of Oman. The Sultan possesses the promontory from Dibba to Shuam, including Khasab ; the Joasmee Shaikh has the coast from Ras al-Khyma to Shargah, and also has Khor Fakan, while the Beni Yas Shaikh holds it from Debaye to Abu Thubi. The promontory, about as far west as Shinas, is occupied by a singular tribe, the Shihiyyeen, concerning the origin of whom there has been much curious speculation. They are said to have a peculiar dialect and their physical aspect is somewhat different from

that of the Arabs, and some writers have even suggested that they are descendants of a European nation, but the people of Koomaz are of Persian descent and they speak a corrupt Persian.

The BATINEH.—The second province is the Batineh or the "Inner," a long curved maritime plain lying between Jebel Akhdar and the Hajar range to the westward and the sea to the eastward. Extending from Ras Mallaha, just above Mareer on the north, where the hills approach the sea, the plain gradually widens until it reaches Jebel Nakhl and Seeb (where the breadth is about forty miles), a distance of 180 miles. The most fertile portion of the province lies in a belt two to three miles wide along the shore, presenting an almost uninterrupted line of castles, houses, mat huts, fruit trees, and varied cultivation from end to end, while behind the belt the ground rises gradually to the base of the hills, and though well watered by numerous ravines and watercourses, intersecting the plain and draining the mountain chain, it is in general but sparsely clothed with vegetation, but with the exception of a few rich oases and a few desert patches the plain is covered with acacias, euphorbias, aloes, and coarse herbage. Viewed from the sea the long unbroken foreshore of white beach, the green strip of cultivation, the brown expanse of acacia jungle, with the dark irregular mass of mountains in the background, offer a very remarkable and picturesque scene.

The more important valleys are about ten in number, namely, Wady Hatta, Wady Jezzi, Wady Ahin, Wady Batha Saham, Wady Howasina, Wady al-Kabir, Wady Beni Ghafir, Wady Rostak, Wady Beni Kharoos, Wady Hammam, and are all well peopled, well cultivated, and well watered; although some of these wadies may reach the sea after heavy rain, very few, if any, are perennial.

The indigenous vegetation of the Batineh is scanty, but the cultivated fringe or belt is rich in fruit trees, among which are the date, mango, mulberry, pomegranate, banana, guava, papaya, betel vine, orange, lime, citron, peach (known as mishmish), fig, apricot, tamerind, jumbo, almond and melon. The aspect is varied by the growth of lucerne, indigo, dhurra or jowari, tobacco, sugar cane,

maize, wheat, barley, pulse and other legumes, and cotton, besides various vegetables.

As regards its industries the Batineh is far in advance of the other provinces of Oman. The fisheries rank first and engage the greatest number of men, while at times the villagers join nets and use them in immense lengths, for the sea abounds in fish and the prodigious quantity captured is almost incredible. Other industries are pottery, red cotton cloth called "Khodrung," for loongies, etc., sail canvas, weaving, indigo dyeing and shipbuilding.

The Batineh contains many strong castles and possesses two of the former capitals, Sohar and Rostak, those inland being Rostak, Hazim, Nakhl, Yenkal, while there are others along the coast; the number of towns, villages, and hamlets being about 300.

There are two groups of islands off the Batineh, namely, the Sowadi Rocks and the Deymanieh Islands, none of which are inhabited. There is no harbour, shelter, or secure anchorage for ships, and larger craft have to lie up at Muscat or elsewhere during the monsoon; while the badans or small coasting vessels are drawn on the beach or moored in one of the small creeks, of which there are several on the coast, and owing to the heavy surf a peculiar kind of surf boat called Shasha, made of date sticks lashed together, is used along the coast. The population of the Batineh is about 700,000.

Geologically the maritime plain appears to belong to the same formation as the mountainous chain, being a horizontal sheet of limestone of the Eocene period.

AL-DHAHIREH, or "The Back," lies behind the Batineh and separated from it by the Hajar range, the crest of which forms the boundary to the eastward, and is divided from Oman Proper by the short spur known as Jebel Koor or Nejd al-Makharim and from the Shemal by the Beraimi Valley. The province is a narrow plateau or tableland devoid of vegetation except in the oases, and intersected by shallow watercourses, which melt away imperceptibly or by gradual descent until they meet the Wady Ain, or lose themselves in the great desert to the westward, from which there is no line of distinction,

and the surface is interrupted only by a few low ranges, such as Jebel Hafeet and Jebel Misht. Al-Dhahireh includes the district of Al-Jow, in which lies Al-Beraimi, and the chief towns are Obre, Dhank, Einain, Doot, Mazoon, Makiniyat, and Ghabbi. The largest wady is the Wady Ain, which flows from Jebel Koor, and is said to reach the sea at Abu Thubi.

A very characteristic and marked contrast exists between the abrupt fall and precipitous aspect of the eastern side of the Hajar range and the comparatively gradual declivity towards the desert. The chief cultivation is that of fruit, and there are a few industries, such as pottery making, cloth weaving, and dyeing. The population is small, in all amounting to perhaps 200,000 persons, but the tribes are by no means inactive, being more turbulent and given to brigandage than the people in any other province.

Oman Proper, the central and politically the most important province, which has given its name to the whole kingdom, stretches across the country over the mountain chain from Adam to the sea, being bounded on the north and west by the Batineh and Dhahireh, as already described, and on the south and east by the Sharkiya. The boundary, however, between Oman and the Sharkiya is not easy to determine as the physical features are not sufficiently well known to us, and the Arabs themselves differ in opinion (according to some the line would run along the crest of the hill from Jebel Tyeen to the Wady Tyeen, as far as Dagmar). On the westward side of the chain the limit is generally put at Semed al-Shan and thence to the desert. Oman Proper thus includes the grand centre clump of the chain known as Jebel Akhdar and the large valley called the Wady Semail. In this province lies the present capital, Muscat ; the old capital, Nezwa, and fourteen other strong castles, namely, Semail, Zikki, Bahila, Adam, Birket al-Mouz, Manha, Fark, Saloot, Yabreen, Hilal, Seroor, Bidbid, Fanja, and Belad Sait. The principal valley is the Wady Semail, which is the chief artery of trade between Muscat and the interior ; the traffic flows easily along the perennial stream, which in the upper part is known as the Wady Beni Rowaihah, and the lower

as Semail ; it is more than 100 miles long, and has more than 100 villages in its course. The main road leading to this highway from Al-Sharkiya is down the Wady Akk, a narrow and precipitous defile, easily defended by a few men, and is looked upon as being of high political and strategical value in troublous times. The tribes occupying this province belong to both political factions, Hinawi and Ghafiri, and are fairly equally divided in strength. The population may be about 400,000.

AL-SHARKIYA, as its name implies, denotes the most easterly province of Oman, and is bounded on two sides by the sea, on the south-west by the desert, and divided from Oman Proper by the hill range, as described above. It is mountainous to the north along the coast, the highest peak being Sohtari, which rises over 6,000 feet, and to the south-west it is more level, more fertile, and more populous. The northern part of Al-Sharkiya is drained by the Wady Tyeen, which flows into the Gulf of Oman, while in the south the watershed throws off four streams, Ethli, Andan, Halfam, and Kalbuh, all of which unite in one and discharge into a creek a little to the east of Mahot in the Bahr al-Hadhri. This province includes three or four luxuriant and well-watered districts, the Tyeen Valley, Jaalan, Bediyeh and by some Semed al-Shan. The first of these is a perennial and important stream occupied by more than thirty villages, and after cutting a deep chasm through the hills known to mariners as the Devil's Gap, reaches the sea at Dagmar, east of Kuriyat.

Jaalan is the maritime district of Al-Sharkiya and one of the richest portions of it ; it is bounded on the west by Bediyeh, and on the east by the sea, which is distant about fifteen miles. It is said to take its name from an ancient tribe that formerly occupied it, the Beni Jaalan or " The Children of the Water Beetle," probably a branch of the Kodhaa. It has two high peaks, Jebel Jaalan and Jebel Karoon, the former being 3,900 feet ; this range is short and tongue shaped, having on its western side a rich valley, well peopled and well watered, occupied by several tribes, of which the chief are

the Beni Bu Ali, Beni Bu Hassan, the Kishm, and the Rasib. The places occupied by the tribes in Jaalan are: Wady Taleefa, Wady Sahah, Jebel Minoof, Al-Kamil, Jebel Nankel, Wady Khalid, Jebel Shamma, and Sekakara. The Beni Bu Ali occupy Belad Beni Bu Ali and Jendeen. The towns of the Kishm are Bowari, Hamaiah, Seef, Sabt, and Al-Kamed. There are many other villages besides those specified, and five or six of them are fortified. The cultivation is extensive and varied, the principal being wheat, millet, maize and lucerne, also dates and other fruits.

Besides two land-locked lagoons, Khor Jeramah and Khor Hejareh, the Sharkiya possesses in Soor the second best port in Oman. This haven, with its long serpentine creek, is a very secure refuge for native craft, many of which are built here of all sizes. The tribes occupying this port are the Jenebeh and Beni Bu Ali; the former is the chief seafaring clan of the province, who in olden times were known as Soories, with an evil repute as pirates. In addition to those already mentioned, the towns in the Sharkiya are Kuriyat, Kilhat, Al-Askkhara, Mahot, Al-Wafi, Kabil, Hamed, Hanaidha, Ghabbi, Ghobra al-Ṭaw, Madhaiby, Kamil, and Belad Beni Bu Ali.

The population may be about 300,000, mostly belonging to the Al-Azd stock from the Yemen, but there are no settled Persians or Belooch in this division. Chief among the Bedouin tribes of this province are the Harth, Al-Deroo, Al-Haboos, Al-Mesakera, Al-Hejrieen, Beni Bu Ali, Beni Bu Hassan, Kishm, Al-Waheebeh, and the Wail, many of whom have been politically concerned in the dynastic disputes and rebellions of later years in Oman.

BEDIYEH.—The district of Bediyeh lies to the west of Jaalan and is watered by seven shallow streams flowing as tributaries into the Wady,* each containing one or more villages. Semed al-Shan is an old town in the Wady Ethli, which intersects a fertile plain and has abundance of water, and is surrounded by groves and cultivation and has also a fortified house, the residence of the Wali.

* The name of the wady was omitted in the original manuscript by the author; possibly he meant the Wady Tyeen.

The outlying division of Al-Gharbiyeh (or "The Western") is that portion of Oman from Abu Thubi to the Subkha Mutta, a distance of over 200 miles and requires but little notice. It is a dreary inhospitable waste with neither villages nor cultivation, but is occasionally visited by the wandering tribes of Al-Morra, Beni Yas, Minaseer, Al-Hajar, and others. In some parts the land is hilly, but it is chiefly low, sandy, or stony, and water is rarely found. There are many rocky and sandy islets off the coast, and not far off is the great pearl-fishing bank. Waterless as the tract is, the western part forms a bone of contention, for though rightfully belonging to the Beni Yas it is claimed by the Shaikh of Al-Bida and Al-Katar.

I more than once discussed the limits of Oman with H.H. Seyyid Turkee, whose varied experience, range of travel and extensive acquaintance with his own country rendered his opinions in all matters of the highest value. It was on his advice that the limit to the south of the Resident's jurisdiction was fixed, and he told me that to the north the geographical limit was at Al-Sabkheh, though politically part of Al-Katar, as far as Odaid, is included in the limits of the Shaikh of Abu Thubi.

The Desert of Arabia.

The great desert of Arabia forms, perhaps, the largest and most inhospitable expanse of sandy waste on the continent of Asia. Lying between Oman to the east, where it is broadest, and Al-Yemen to the west, where it is narrowest, it has a length of about 700 miles. To the north it is bounded by Nejd, Yemama, and Al-Hasar, and to the south by Hadhramaut, Dhofar, and the Bahr al-Hadhri, with an average breadth of 300 miles. As regards the physical features of this immense tract we are almost in entire ignorance, as no European traveller has hitherto explored its recesses, and we have only the vague and uncertain accounts of the Bedouins to rely upon. We know, however, that to the north-east there is the Dahna, a wild solitary region presenting a succession of red sandy ridges like the

waves of the ocean, where only the scantiest vegetation can exist and where even the most reckless Bedouin seldom care to wander.

Another portion of the desert is known as Al-Ahkaf, which is said to consist of sand heaps overlying black rock. A great part of the desert is described by Arabs as being a stony undulating plain, diversified by ranges of low hills and intersected by shallow and dry watercourses with sand mounds, but nothing conspicuous to catch the eye and mark the way. In the hollows of the ground shallow pools are formed after rain, and on evaporation the soil is encrusted with saline efflorescence or nitre, which gives a white appearance.

The sand heaps of the eastern part of the desert, with which we are now concerned, are known by various names, such as Kowad, Ahkaf, and Katheeb. In speaking of the desert generally, the Bedouins call it Al-Jafoor, or the "unfrequented space"; Al-Ramool, or "the sands"; Al-Ahkaf, or the "sand heaps"; the desert is also known to some as the Sahra or "desert." In Arab geographical works it is called by the expressive name of Rabi al-Khali, or "empty habitation," but the Bedouins have their own names for the various districts and oases distinguished by special characteristics. Probably no other part of the world's surface can compare in its desolation with this wilderness, where save camels, goats, wild animals and a few wandering Bedouins, no life exists, and where its immutable aspect is characterized by dreariness, lethargy, and monotony.

The climate of the desert is not unaffected by the monsoons, and though rain is comparatively scanty, showers are not altogether absent. The soil being poor and barren and affected with scantiness of rain and extreme heat, we can expect to find only a stunted and meagre vegetation, which consists of low arborescent growth, several species of acacias, such as the Sayel, Sumr, and Ghaf, also Euphorbias, Ghadaf or dwarf palm, probably a chamerops, tamarisk, rhamnus or sidr, rak, harmal or rue, senna, colocynth, rose-laurel or *Nerium Oleander*, coarse grass and other herbaceous plants on which camels find their sustenance. The desert may be said to belong to the various tribes surrounding it and occupying its borderland. Bedouin

contingents from these tribes roam over it in all directions and rear great numbers of camels of the finest breed. On the northern side the Dowasir, Minaseer, Al-Morra, and other tribes of Nejd, Yemama and Al-Hassa frequent it. On the east the desert is made use of by the Omani tribes, such as the Awamir, Al-Waheebeh, Deroo, Haboos, and Waeel, while to the south it is visited and claimed by the various branches of the great Mahra race, the Menhali, Hasreet, Ba Mali and several others. The dromedaries raised by the Omani and Mahra tribes are celebrated for their speed, beauty and endurance, and the Shereef of Mecca receives an annual present of a few for his special use from the Sultan of Muscat.

The Awamir, Al-Morra, and Dowasir Bedoos are said to traverse the desert very extensively, and probably no part of it, except the Dahna, is altogether inaccessible to them, but at the same time it is doubtful whether the Dowasir of the north ever actually come in contact with the Mahra of the south ; at least I could not learn from the latter of their having done so. Part of the Awamir tribe are settled in the Province of Oman Proper and follow agricultural pursuits. The Bedouin portion of the Awamir is perhaps the most widely scattered of all the Oman tribes, wandering as far as Hadhramaut in a state of semi-savagedom, and it is probable that no wilder or more predatory race exists in Arabia.

In 1874, in obedience to the Sultan's summons, a party of Awamir crossed the desert, from the Wady Rekot to Muscat, a distance of 400 miles, and returned the way they came, and they assured me that they had no difficulty in traversing the desert in any direction ; the routes by which caravans in former times crossed the desert has been investigated by Dr. Sprenger in the " Post und Reise Routen " and " Alte Geographie Arabiens." The above tribes do not now appear to wander about with their families, flocks, and sheep like those in Northern Arabia, in search of pasture, but roam about in small parties of men, keeping watch over their camels browsing on the herbage.

The Bedoos seldom get bread of any kind except when visiting the town to barter camels for necessaries ; their main food for eight or

species in which are the date, acacia, and tamarisk. In general, the native flora presents in aspect, and partakes of, the character of India and Africa, but Oman also possesses many forms peculiar to itself. In the higher parts of the mountain chain may be found the plane, oak, sycamore, juniper, cypress, and others, but there is no luxuriance of forest growth, as the soil is too thin to allow the production in most parts of large timber trees. In warm regions, thorny mimosas and scrub of a spinous nature are abundant and are of value as fuel and as providing food for goats and camels.

Oman was partially explored botanically in 1836, when M. Aucher Eloy visited Jebel Akhdar. He states in his work that he found many pretty flowers well suited for importation into Europe. At Nakhl he found the vegetation new and unknown to him. Among these was a species of the genus Nieburia, a flowering shrub which he named Vogelia Leprosa, of which he sent seeds to Paris; also a new Dictyopteris, a new species of *Iphiona Horrida*, a little Linaria, and the *Moringa Arabica*. At Al-Hajar he found a new Boerhavia, and a new violet, as well as a new primula and a new species of *Lonicera* which he named Aurea. At Tanoof he discovered a new species of Cissus; altogether M. Aucher Eloy gathered about 250 specimens and reckoned that there might be 500 species in Oman altogether.

In enumerating here the more important trees and plants, of which Oman can boast it may be noted that the majority of them are probably of foreign origin. Several species of acacia thrive on the arid stony wastes and three in particular may be mentioned, *i.e.*, the *Acacia Vera*, Arabic name Samr, the true gum arabic tree; the *Acacia Arabica*, Arabic name Ghaf, the Babool of India; the *Acacia Nilotica*, Arabic name Sayel.

The Almond (Arabic Loz) is cultivated in many places.

The Aloe (Arabic Sabr) grows scantily in Oman. It is much used in medicine and the people have superstitious ideas about it.

The Apricot (Arabic Barkuk).

Artocarpus or Jack fruit (the Indian Fannus), said by Palgrave to grow in the Batineh.

The Banana (Arabic Mouz), the Banian tree or *Ficus Indica* (Arabic Roula).

Bdellium (Arabic Mookl), this fragrant resin was found at Dhofar by Dr. Carter and is supposed to be the " Bedolah " of Genesis 2, 12.

The Betel Pepper Vine or Pan grows in the vicinity of Muscat and in the Batineh.

Boswellia or frankincense (Arabic Luban), the latter word being the origin of the European term Olibanum. Birdwood describes three species, namely, *Boswellia Carterii, Boswellia Frereana, Boswellia Bhau Dajiana,* and it is found in the hills at Dhofar, from whence it is exported to Bombay. In ancient times frankincense formed a very considerable article of commerce and is still largely used.

Calotropis Gigantea, or silk tree (Arabic Ashur), grows everywhere in Oman in the desert parts and has many uses, fibrous as well as medicinal. Its milky juice forms a kind of gutta percha.

Chamerops, or Dwarf palm (Arabic Ghadaf), a desert plant said to have medicinal virtues.

Cherry, noted by M. Aucher Eloy as cultivated in Jebel-Akhdar.

Cissus (Arabic Zaroo), this tree was also observed by M. Aucher Eloy ; it is said to be a remedy for rheumatism.

The Citron is cultivated to a small extent only.

Citrullus Colocynthus, or bitter apple (Arabic Handal), grows on a low scabrous plant and is very abundant in dry sandy places ; a well-known item in *Materia Medica.*

The Coconut (Arabic Narayel) has been introduced into the Batineh but does not thrive there and never produces any fruit.

Cordia Mixa (Arabic Lebak), the Selpertin plum, furnishes useful products, both medicinal and otherwise.

Cotton, Gossypium (Arabic Katn), two varieties, brown and

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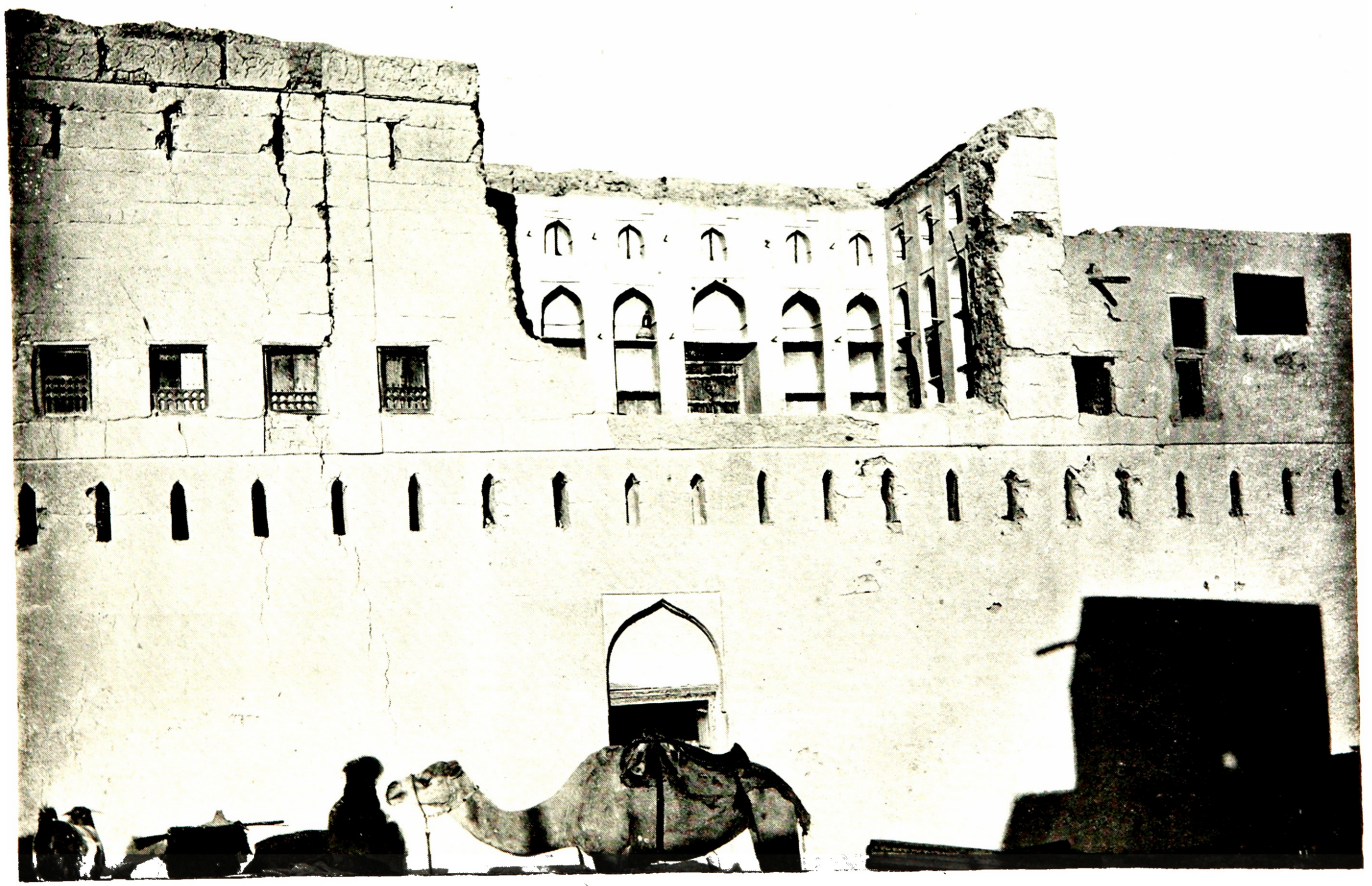

SEYYID HAMED BIN AZZAR'S HOUSE AT ROSTAK.

[*See p.* 337]

white; the brown variety is known as Khodrung, and being preferred by the Arabs is more extensively used in the looms.

Custard Apple (Arabic Istafel).

Date Palm (*Phœnix dactylifera*) (Arabic Nakhl), the most important and widely cultivated tree in Oman, and which furnishes one of the staple foods.

Dragon's Blood (Arabic Dam al-Akhwan), said to grow at Dhofar.

The Euphorbia, several species (Arabic Shirka), the acrid juice is used medicinally by the Arabs.

The Fig (*Ficus Carica*) (Arabic Teen).

Guava. Cultivated in the Batineh.

Henna, Lawsonia (Mertus or Alba), used as a dye to stain the hair and nails.

Indigo, *Indigo Glauca* (Arabic Neel), grows wild and used extensively as dye for cloth.

Lucerne is commonly grown throughout the country as fodder for horses, cattle, and camels.

Limes and sweet limes, formerly exported in great quantities to Calcutta.

Madder (Arabic Warrus) is sometimes cultivated as a dye stuff.

Mango is another fruit much grown, particularly in the maritime plains.

The mangrove grows in many places along the shore but is used only for firewood; its singular adventitious roots were described more than 300 years before Christ by Theophrastus, who saw it in the Persian Gulf.

Melia Azidiracta (Arabic Neem) grows in the Batıneh.

Melons (Arabic Kharboza and Tarboza) are plentiful.

Moringa Arabica, or horse radish tree, seen by M. Aucher Eloy.

Moringa Aptera, said to be the Yessur of the Yemen.

Mulberry, orange, papaya, peach, or mishmish, plum, pomegranate.

Rumman and Quince are among the fruits cultivated.

Nerium Oleander, or Rose Laurel, with its sweet scented flowers, is found in almost every wady.

Nieburia, a genus so named after the distinguished traveller; a new species was found by M. Aucher Eloy.

Pandanus Odoratissimus, or screw pine (Arabic Kali or Keora), furnishes useful products.

Rhamnus Nebeca, or the Jujube tree (Arabic Sidr), grows wild everywhere.

Ricinus, or *Palma Christi*, the castor oil plant (Arabic Ara).

Safflower, *Carthamus Tinctorius* (Arabic Shooram), used by the women as a cosmetic to stain their faces yellow.

Senna, *Cassia Angustifolia* (Arabic Senna Makki), an important medicinal plant which grows in dry sandy parts.

Shaddock, *Citrus Decumana*, grows in the Batineh.

Sesamum Indicum (Arabic Simsim or Jiritch) produce the gingelly oil of commerce, cultivated in the Batineh.

Sugar Cane is cultivated in several parts of Oman; at Birket al-Mouz it grows at an elevation of 2,000 feet.

Tamarind (Arabic Hamer) is not uncommon, the fruit is used medicinally.

Tamarisk (Arabic Turfa and Ithel) is widely distributed and few wadies are to be found without it.

Tobacco is cultivated in the Batineh and in Al-Dhahireh to a small extent, chiefly for the Persians and Belooch; the Arabs of Oman in general do not smoke.

The Vine (Arabic Anab), cultivated in many valleys and in the Batineh.

Walnut (Arabic Joaz) is chiefly grown in Jebel Akhdar.

Besides the above trees are many plants of which the Arab name is known, but which have not been identified. Agriculture has made but little progress in Oman as the people bestow but little labour on it. The crops depend in some measure on the rain, though they have mostly to be irrigated from felejes and wells. The cereals are wheat, jewari or dhurra, and barley. Coarse bread made of millet

or jewari is eaten by the poorer classes, but the well-to-do prefer rice, which has to be imported from India, as there are no lowlands in Oman suitable for its production.

The date, however, is so much consumed that it is more truly the bread of the people, of whom the staple food may be said to be dates, rice, and fish. Most of the common Indian vegetables are grown, but the quantity is limited except in the larger towns, as the Arabs are not partial to herbs, but pulse, of sorts, is much cultivated. The wealthier Arabs are very fond of their bostans or gardens, in which they grow flowers, vegetables, and trees.

*THE DATE, *Phœnix Dactylifera.*—The uses to which the dactiliferous palm are put by the Arabs are numerous and the details would require a lengthy description. In the first place the fruit is the bread of the people, the staff of life, and except as regards two or three varieties, it will keep for months and even years, while the only other foods to compete with it are rice and barley; when half ripe the date is soft and sweet at the top and is then a delicacy. The wood supplies timber, the leaves roofing for huts, the fibres are used for making ropes, and a segment of the tree is often used as a ladder, the tree being split lengthwise, up which the Arabs climb like cats; date sticks are used for making boats called Shasha, also for fences, and a hundred other purposes. The date matures when about eighteen years old and produces from 100 to 300 lbs. of fruit, while it requires no attention but irrigation. Female dates have all to be impregnated; one male, Fahil, is sufficient for 600 or 700 female trees. The male rises to 130 feet, and a sprig often costs several dollars, when it has a good reputation, for male palms are like stallions. The pith of the tree is considered a delicacy as is also the fruit in early stages, when about a quarter of an inch long, as it has a nutty taste and is cut off then to thin the produce in the same way as grapes are thinned; half-ripe dates are very nice. Date-trees

* A few notes on the more important products of Oman may be of interest and are here inserted.

are afflicted in Wady Maih with a peculiar disease called Muttuk, by which the fruit dissolves into a sort of treacle or shira, and from which the tree does not recover for five years after an attack; this disease is only known in Wadis Maih and Hatat.

A worm called Koko also destroys dates, and the branches of fruit are put in bags to protect them. There are nine progressive stages of the ripening of the date fruit, viz., Talla, Aukzeez, Khatal, Safoor, Bissir, Basoom, Gereen, Ratab, Hamad al-Tamr. The fifth stage probably gives its name to the dried date, or Kharak.

There are ten or twelve really good kinds of dates in Oman, the rest are indiscriminately known as Kush. Palms are never grown from seed as it is impossible to tell what will be produced; the stone of a date if planted may turn out male or female, or even another kind. Trees in very favourable situations bear in one year, but they generally take two or three. The Arabs climb the trees by using a rope which passes round both man and tree.

VINES.—The vines are carefully trained on trellises at certain distances and are regularly pruned (in March), irrigated and manured. The grapes appeared to be all black. The bunches of fruit, when collected, are put into a large shallow vessel or tub and are crushed by being trodden under foot. The juice thus squeezed out is not drawn off separately, but the whole mass, juice, pulp, skins, stalks, pips, and all is then put into jars and after being diluted with water is left for about three weeks to ferment. It is considered fit to drink about three months after the fruit has been plucked. In the long winter evenings the Sharaizi men spend their time in consuming the liquor they have made and, I believe, no drop of it is ever exported or ever leaves the mountains; no wine is either made or procurable in any other part of Oman.

The predilection of the inhabitants of this town for the juice of the grape as well as their knowledge of the manufacture of wine are due to their Persian origin, and to the same cause also may be ascribed the construction of the mountain terraces, or at least the development of them. The more religiously inclined of the people

of Oman are much scandalized at this making of wine in their midst, as the making of fermented liquor was prohibited by Mohammed in the Koran.

THE FIG (*Ficus Carica*) is known to the Arabs as Teen.

The Arabs consider figs a necessity of life, the fruit having been used as an article of food from time immemorial ; it grows throughout Oman and is very luscious. The trees being small do not afford much shade, but it is everywhere cultivated ; but the Arabs do not dry and export the fruit in spite of the fact of the soil and climate being so favourable to its growth.

THE SUGAR CANE.—The sugar cane is largely grown in Oman for food and has been known for centuries. It is propagated, as in India, from cuttings, not from seed, the two reasons assigned for this being that the germination of the seed is uncertain and that it takes longer to attain maturity. At Birket al-Mouz it is growing at an elevation of 2,000 feet, this being the highest point I remember to have seen it ; in Arabia sugar is known as Kand. The Omanis have only been able to produce a coarse treacle, and have not succeeded in reaching the crystalline stage of its manufacture.

MANGROVES.—The value of the mangroves as an agent in the reclamation of land on the sea coast is well known. At Mahot, where the Kalbuh stream debouches, there is a dense mass of mangrove thirty or forty feet high extending into the sea, though the coral reefs seem to prevent much expansion. The roots are formed by the branches dropping into the sea, the latter being covered with crustaceans, and the trees are at times loaded with the nests of birds. The bark is said to be astringent and full of tannin, and the wood to produce dye, but I am not aware that the Arabs ever make use of it in this way ; the roots are arched like the screw pine.

List of Arabian Trees and Plants.

	Arabic Name.		*Arabic Name.*
Acacia, Arabica ..	Ghaf.	Lime.	
Acacia, Nilotica ..	Sayel	Lucerne.	
Acacia, Vera ..	Sumr.	Madder	Warrus
Adamsonia.		Mango.	
Almond	Loz.	Mangrove.	
Aloe	Sabr.	*Melia Azidiracta* ..	Neem.
Apricot	Barkuk.	Melon	Kharboza.
Artocarpus.		*Moringa Arabica.*	
Banana	Mouz.	*Moringa Aptera.* ..	Yessur.
Banian	Roula.	Myrtle	Yas.
Bdellium	Mookl.	Mulberry	Toot.
Betel Vine.		Nieburia.	
Boswellia	Luban.	Nuts.	
Calotropis ..	Ashur.	Oleander Nerium.	
Chamerops ..	Ghadaf.	Orange	Narange.
Cherry.		Pandanus, Screw Pine	Keora.
Cissus	Zaroo.	Papaya	Fefai.
Citron.		Peach	Mishmish.
Citrullus Colocynthus	Handal.	Pepper	Filfil.
Coconut	Narayel.	Plums	Jambu.
Crocus.		Pomegranate ..	Rumman.
Cordia Mixa ..	Lebak.	Quince	Safarjal.
Cotton	Katn.	*Rhamnus Nebeca* ..	Sidr.
Custard Apple ..	Istafel.	Ricinus	Ara.
Date	Nakhl.	Rose	Ward.
Dragon's Blood ..	Dam al-Akhwan.	Rue	Harmel.
		Senna	Senna Makki.
Euphorbia ..	Shirka.	*Sesamum Indicum*	Simsim & Jiritch.
Fig	Teen.		
Guava.		Sugar Cane ..	Kand.
Henna, Lawsonia.		Sweet Lime.	
Indigo, Glauca ..	Neel.		

List of Arabian Trees and Plants.

	Arabic Name.		*Arabic Name.*
Tamarind ..	.. Hamer.	Turmeric ..	.. Huldi.
Tamarisk ..	.. Turfa and Ithel.	Vine ..	.. Anab.
		Walnut ..	.. Joaz.
Thyme.		Wild Lavender.	
Tobacco.			

Sketch of the Geology of Oman.

The geology of Oman offers a very interesting field for the geologist and it awaits the appearance of a professor of that science to thoroughly explore the country and give the results of his researches.

From the observations of Dr. H. J. Carter, who was attached to the East India Company's Nautical Surveying brig *Palinurus*, and visited the Arabian Coast in 1836 and 1844, and who gives a valuable account of the geology of the coast from Muscat to Dhofar, we have a good general idea of the rock formation of the land. The great chain of mountains extends, as we have seen, from one end of the land almost to the other, and is composed of sedimentary rocks with outbursts of metamorphic rocks at Muscat, Jibsh, Madraka and Fezaniyyia.

From Mussendom to Jebel Akhdar the formation is limestone, chiefly nummulitic and sandstone overlying conglomerate, the strata at Mussendom being horizontal, but in the interior more confused and often lying at great angles. The colour of the limestone is very varied, often yellowish or white, and at Mussendom and Kilhat, black or dark grey. Near Muscat the volcanic rocks are very apparent, being composed of serpentine and diorite, extending along the coast for ten or twelve miles, from Darsait to Yiti.

Carter remarks that South of Muscat the strata is broken up and distorted, rising tier behind tier for thirty miles, until it reaches its maximum height about 6,000 feet, forty miles inland. The hills then approach the coast until we come to the Devil's Gap, the range

being called Jebel Sohteri or Kuriyat, 6,228 feet; beyond the Gap the range is known as Jebel Jabir and further on as Jebel Kilhat as it reaches Soor, all three mountains being of the same limestone formation as Mussendom. The volcanic formation reappears south of Ras al-Had at several places along the coast, and at Dhofar, where granite and other igneous rocks are found, but the general formation on the south coast, as far as Dhofar, is nummulitic limestone and to the north and east.

Viewing Ras Mussendom from seaward, this stupendous Cape forcibly strikes one with the idea that it once was united with the chain on the Persian Coast, and that by a sudden subsidence of the earth at some distant geological period the sea rushed in to form the Persian Gulf and filled the valleys and ravines and inlets as we now see them.

Among the minerals found by Dr. Carter in his examination of therocks were hornblende, jasper, quartzite, felspar, diallage, basalt, calcspar, etc. The composition of the hills being naturally unfavourable to plant life, the verdure, except in the valleys, is very scanty.

Of metals, four only appear to have been found in Oman. The copper mine at Khadhra near Semed al-Shan was once largely worked but now produces little, if any; this metal is also found near Kuriyat and in the Island of Maseera, where lead is also known to exist. Silver was formerly worked at Jebel Akhdar, but the mine has long been disused. The hills near Muscat are ferriferous, but the ore has not been considered worth extracting. A valuable contributor to the geology of Muscat is Captain Newbold, who visited that port in 1849.

FISHERIES.—The Arabs, the earliest navigators in the world, have ever had a predilection for the sea, and have shown themselves to be on this element a bold, hardy, and adventurous race. The inhabitants of Eastern Arabia, in particular, have from remote times been noteworthy in this respect. High spirited and independent they occupy a land not remarkable for vegetable or mineral wealth, but possessing a long and diversified line of coast with a rich sea

fauna, have been accustomed to turn their attention to the latter as a source of food supply. The fisheries have thus become one of the most important industries in Oman and affect a large proportion of the population.

Fish are so abundant that the whole coast of Oman is a continuous series of fishing stations, where the markets are stocked with fresh and salt fish. The fishermen carry on their occupation with great expertness and go out far to sea for sharks, and are as sturdy as they are industrious ; the poorer fishermen, who own no share in a boat, use the casting-net. The real work of fishing is done by the Arabs themselves, for although a few negro slaves may be seen in the boats, they are only employed in helping at the oars and cannot be trusted in severe and arduous labour at the nets. Often superior in muscular strength to the Arabs, they are so inferior in courage, skill, and intelligence as to be practically worthless. During the gathering of the date harvest in August and September a large section of the fisher class find employment in the interior and are thus drawn away from the sea in the height of the monsoon, therefore the fisheries decline and only the larger boats go out. At all other times the fishermen are at work at sea, and numbers of boats are always out, the best seasons being spring and late autumn.

Modes of fishing.—The modes of fishing may be divided into four kinds—firstly, for fish frequenting the open sea ; secondly, for those near the shore ; thirdly, for surface fish ; and fourthly, for those found near the bottom. The modes vary also according to the seasons and the movements of these creatures. At certain times the boats go out early and return with their takes in the evening ; at other times they leave in the evening, fish all night, and return in the morning. In either case the fish are sold by auction or direct to regular customers, the fishers retaining some for their own consumption. There are, of course, slightly different methods of fishing at different parts of the coast, according to the various kinds of fish sought for ; on this, as well as on the nature of the coast and depth of sea, depend the modifications. Various kinds of nets are used on the Oman coast. The general name for a net is Leekh or Shabka,

but each sort has its specific name. In some of the nets, chiefly those shot overnight, the fish are entangled by their gills, in others the fish are enveloped and drawn up to a boat or dragged on shore.

The Seine nets used on the Batineh Coast and other sandy bays are very long and narrow, the villagers combining and joining nets for the mutual advantage for a great haul, and the fish captured are divided by the Shaikhs, in the presence of the community ; it is shot in a semicircle, the wings being drawn on shore by men. A drift net much used in the Gulf is called the Karoon. It is formed of a number of pieces and is gathered in by the owners, the takes being then divided equally on the spot. A similar series of nets but longer and sunk in deeper water for heavier fish is called Asharee or Ghobut, which is left out at night. Another net of the same kind, with a very large mesh, is called Formales. The floats of these nets are usually date-leaf stems, called Tafool, or bits of wood of the screw pine, the weights being pieces of lead or stones. One of the most useful nets the Arabs possess is the Yel trawl, a drag net with a small mesh and a large purse ; it is used for catching sardines, Kasha, and other small fish. Another net is the Mansab. The Trammel net appears to be unknown in the Gulf. Live bait is obtained either by the casting net called Siliya or Dakeek, which is adroitly thrown over a shoal of small fishes, or by a method peculiar to Muscat. In the latter case when a shoal is sighted in the harbour the fishermen drop a net round it in the form of a circle and the fish are driven to entangle themselves in the net by a log of wood attached to a rope being thrown into the midst from one of the boats, and by one of the men jumping into the water and splashing about ; the net is then drawn into the boat. The fishing boats have a wicker basket alongside to keep the bait alive, but the Arabs are very dexterous in spinning the dead bait, tying the head of the fish in such a manner that it continues to spin while towed through the water. The hook used by the Arabs is peculiar, being almost circular and unbarbed. It is made of iron by the local blacksmith and is called Meedar ; the end opposite the point is turned inwards to form a small ring to which the line is attached. European hooks, however, are gradually

taking the place of the primitive Arab article. Considering their rough boats and implements the Arabs are surprisingly expert and daring in catching large fish and in managing nets. The depth of the water generally chosen for line fishing is from 30 to 40 fathoms ; the long lines or trots are little used by the Arabs as the sharks that infest these seas would destroy all the fish caught by them ; the seer fish, struggling in a long line, would soon attract the sharks and be dragged off. The hand liners keep from ten to thirty miles off shore, where the fish they seek for most abound.

Other methods employed in catching fish are the Gargoor, a large circular basket trap from ten to twenty feet in circumference ; these traps are sunk for a day or two in deep water and then taken up. Another trap is the Hidhra, made of date-sticks securely tied together and driven into the sand, forming a semicircular or horse-shoe fence, which, when the tide runs out, leaves the fish high and dry. The fish spear sometimes used for taking porpoises and rays is about nine feet long and barbed, with a rig at the upper end, to which a line is attached ; it is called Kawar.

Products.—The harvest of the sea in Eastern Arabia is very important and not only provides food for a large portion of the population, but gives employment to many in fishing, netting, boat-building, and curing. The abundance of fish in the Arabian Sea is truly astonishing, and as salt is cheap on the Oman Coast, immense quantities are caught and salted, both for home consumption and export. Salt is brought from the Islands of Kishm and Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, the former having hills of salt with caves of great extent and remarkable beauty from their strata of various hues, and Hormuz being literally half sulphur and half salt. As salt can thus be obtained easily, fish curing is a big industry, but as the process is very crude and imperfect neither the quantity nor the quality are equal to the demand. The fish chiefly cured is the sehwa or horse mackerel or rudder fish, one of the Carangidæ and known under the trade name of Snooks. It is about three feet long and has a keeled ridge near the tail ; it is largely exported to the Mauritius, Bourbon and Natal. The seer fish or kunud, *cibium guttatum*, also called the Indian salmon,

is an excellent table fish but less delicate in flavour than the salmon ; it runs to about three or four feet, and is said to ascend rivers to spawn. The fish sidr is salted for home consumption as well as for export. The mullet, known to the Arabs as Bujaa, is salted down in large quantities and exported to India. The sword fish—Histiophorus—called by the Arabs Sansool, is captured in great quantities at sea and is much esteemed as food by the poor ; it is roughly salted or despatched fresh into the interior. Immediately the fishing boats touch the beach, these fish, often thirty or forty pounds in weight, are placed on the backs of asses and sent off into the interior. Of course the heat of the sun brings on putrefaction, and these caravans of donkeys, when seen on the road, can be scented afar off. The sardine, almost the only representative of the herring family in these seas, is called Seima. It is caught in great multitudes on the coast and is used for bait, manure, and for the extraction of oil. For the last purpose, the sardines are exposed to the sun, the heat of which causes the oil to exude, which is then collected in jars ; it is, however, considered inferior to the oil obtained from shark livers. Fish fry, called Kasha, is also largely caught, especially near Cape Mussendom, where they are desiccated in the sun without further attention and are then packed in mat bags, about eight feet long, being then known as Metoot.

Of all fish, however, the most valuable to the Arabs for its economic products is the shark, which is pursued not only in the Arabian Sea but by the coast dwellers of Southern and Eastern Asia, who value it as food, the meat being considered sustaining and invigorating, and almost the whole of the body of this formidable creature is made use of by the Arabs. The flesh is exhibited in the bazaars of the coast towns, fresh, salted, and sun-dried. Cut in strips it is sent into the interior to the Bedouins ; it forms indeed the staple meat food of the poor and slaves ; the better classes, however, do not touch it. The fins are exported to Bombay, where they join the stream that flows unceasingly to China ; they are sorted into two kinds, black and white, the latter consisting of the dorsal fins only, while the former includes the ventral and pectoral fins, which are

dark on one side. After the roots have been rubbed in lime the fins are packed in gunny bags. The shark livers furnish oil in large quantities, the supply always being more copious in the cold season. Vegetable oil being scarce in Arabia, fish oil is used for many purposes; it is largely used for painting the bottoms of dhows and other native craft, it being for this purpose mixed with Noora or slaked lime and then smeared over the timbers to protect the vessel from teredos or ship worms, barnacles, and sea weed. The oil is obtained by throwing the livers into a tank and crushing them with the foot. The liver of a large shark often produces two tubs of oil, and the livers of rays and other fish also produce oil in less proportion. The skin is made into shagreen, which is used for polishing ivory and other purposes, but much of the shagreen in the market is said to be made of camels and asses' skin.

Fish Sounds, known in commerce as Fish Maws, are the air bladders of those fish which frequent the surface of the ocean, and do not pertain to the fishes keeping near the ground. The sounds are of membrinous texture, translucent, and of a light amber colour; formerly these sounds were all sent to the China market and sold at a very cheap rate, but in 1839 it was discovered that sounds were identical with isinglass, and much is now sent direct to Europe.

Turtles abound in the Arabian Sea, the commonest, perhaps, being the Hawksbill Turtle, *Caretta Imbricata*, which yields the tortoiseshell of commerce. The Arabs capture them in nets or turn them over on their backs when they come ashore at night to lay eggs; the general Arab name for a turtle is Hamza, but the fishermen often call it Ghiadum, the tortoiseshell being called Dibbal, and is brought from many places on the coast to Muscat, from whence it is exported to Bombay. The spotted turtle is known as Sheroo, but is not caught as it does not produce tortoiseshell. The Arabs generally kill the turtle before removing the carapace, but the natives of the Indian Archipelago are said to observe the cruel practice of removing it by heat while the animal is still alive. There are four scales on each side and five in the middle, making thirteen in all. The turtle, *Caretta Imbricata*, derives its Latin name from the fact that the scales on the

carapace imbricate or overlap like roofing slates. The turtle is probably unique in having the skeleton outside the flesh and attached to the carapace. A good deal of oil is extracted from them, and the flesh, which is said to be quite as good as that of the Leather-back, is eaten by the fishermen, but Persians and other Shihrs will not touch it.

Ambergris is a solid lump of matter often cast ashore on the Oman coast, and is at first of an unpleasant odour but improves later and is much esteemed by the Arabs as a perfume. It is supposed to be a diseased product of the cachalot whale.

Mother-of-pearl shell, so much used in the Arts, is found at several points along the Arab coast, between the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. The Arabs have to dive for these shells in several fathoms of water and bring boat loads of them to Muscat for re-export.

Cetacea.—The Cetaceans or the whale tribe are represented in the Persian and Oman Gulfs by the cachalot or sperm whale, and several species of Delphinidæ, including the porpoises. The Cachalot, *Physeter Macrocephalus,* is gregarious and feeds on cuttle fish. It may occasionally be seen blowing after taking a meal in the way that frightened Nearchus and his sailors more than 2,200 years ago. Arabs call it Nahm. They do not now pursue it professionally, though it is said that many years ago a village at the end of Maseera Island was devoted to the whale fishery, but this is not the case at present. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the American whalers used frequently to visit these seas but have recently confined themselves to the southern part of the Indian Ocean. When they find a whale stranded the Arabs make use of the spermaceti or blubber as well as the teeth, which are turned into dagger handles. In 1885 the bones of a cachalot whale, which had been stranded on the Batineh Coast, were brought to Muscat, but the teeth had already been removed.

The great Indian Rorqual, the largest living animal, reaching over 100 feet, is found in the Indian Ocean, but it seems doubtful whether it extends as far north as the Persian Gulf.

The Delphinidæ, or dolphins, include the grampus or bottle-nosed whale, of which there are probably three species. The word

grampus is probably a corruption of the Arabic word Jerran, a whale. Many years ago Muscat harbour was frequented by a grampus known to the Indian Navy seamen as " Old Tom," but it has not been seen of late years. The porpoise is also included in this genus or order. It is common in these seas and is called Dookh, or more often " Soos."

Fish.—The coast of Oman is remarkable for the wealth, variety, and strangeness of its marine fauna. The coral reefs, the sandy beaches, and the rocky headlands all presenting singular forms of life along the littoral. During the summer months the surface of the sea for many miles off shore is covered with floating fish spawn in immense patches of rusty red or yellowish colour and which gives off a disagreeable odour, which is eventually hatched by the heat of the sun. The chief nurseries are the various coves, creeks, inlets, and sinuosities of the coast, where the fry are to be seen in incredible number. When in the adult stage, fish are incessantly migrating from one locality to another, their place being taken by other species, the chief cause of these movements being, no doubt, the search for food. Instead of the familiar fishes we find in the sea round England, we observe novel and strange forms, some of which are of great value as food. Of the four great families of fishes, so important to man in this respect, namely, the herrings, the mackerels, the cod fishes, and the salmonidæ, the two last are, perhaps, entirely absent from the Indian Ocean, and the herrings are represented only by a single order, the sardines. The mackerel tribe is particularly abundant, and various species, such as the horse mackerel, seer fish, etc., are captured and cured for human consumption on an extensive scale. Of all the fish found in the Arabian Sea, perhaps the most important to man, not only as regards food but for its manifold uses, is the shark, which is pursued by the Arabs fearlessly and relentlessly. The harvest in Oman is probably not less than 100,000 sharks annually. These cartilaginous fishes have a long cylindrical scaleless body and are very serpentine in their movements, their elongated body forming two curves at a time, and move through the sea with extraordinary velocity, outstripping with ease any other denizens of the deep. The pointed snout serves

to accelerate the speed, but the mouth is so far back that they are compelled to turn over to seize their prey. They are divided by naturalists into ten families and subdivided into 140 species, some oviparous and some viviparous, the largest family, perhaps, being the Carcharidæ, or true sharks. The larger sharks are pelagic, not approaching the shore, but keeping far out to sea, feeding on the great shoals of fish that migrate from one locality to another in search of food at certain times. The smaller sharks are ground sharks. The white sharks and other monsters are called by the Arabs Sultan al-Bahr or Malek al-Bahr ("Kings of the sea"), but have various names at different parts of the coast; the general name is Jerjoor, also Lakhm, or Kalb al-Bahr. The spotted shark is called Nimarani, or the leopard, while another is the Shotafee. The diabolical and vicious hammer-headed shark, *Zygæna Malleus*, of which there are five species, though not exceeding 12 feet in length, is the most dreaded of all; it is known at Muscat as Boo Karoon and at Aden as Bukhait. The sharks which inhabit mid-ocean are hunted by the Arabs in their bughlas and badans. The number of smaller sharks caught by the Jenebeh and Beni Bu Ali tribe is prodigious; at Soor alone the average take is fifty or sixty per diem, ranging from six to twelve feet in length, but the old practice of fishing for sharks on the girba, which consisted of two inflated goatskins supporting a plank on which the fisherman sat, has been abandoned, owing to the number of accidents and mutilation of limbs that resulted. The man, when using this contrivance, was very expert in hauling up the shark, which struggled desperately, giving him a good deal of trouble before it could be stunned with blows on the snout by an iron club. One way of fishing was by using the girba as a float, the line being hauled by the fisherman when the float was observed to move; the line had always to be protected by a piece of iron chain between the hook and the rope.

The rays, of which there are many species, some very large, are numerous in the Arabian Sea and are caught for their fins, which are sent to China, like those of the shark; rays are also used for food and for oil. The most formidable species is the sawfish which

carries a heavy armament, this weapon consisting of a horrible sharp-toothed snout five or six feet long, by which it attacks whales and large fish, ripping the abdomen across and feeding on the protruding entrails—a most unpleasant habit. The pearl divers of the Persian Gulf, who care nothing for sharks, dread this brute, whose assault is certain death. The eyes of the sawfish are said to be very peculiar and unlike those of other fish. The snout is not made use of by the Arabs except as a talisman to keep off the evil eye and to bring good luck. The sting ray is not uncommon and is a dangerous fish to handle, its sting being sharp and barbed. The long-tailed eagle or whip ray is also common; it has a very rough skin, which is made to cover sword handles and shields.

Among the edible fish there are, besides those already mentioned, the dolphin, famous for the beauty of its coloration, which fades on its death; this fish abounds in the Arabian Sea and is good eating, and like the Albicore or Bonito, pursues the flying fish which takes long flights to escape it. The word dolphin is also applied to the grampus and has caused confusion. The flying fish, called by the Arabs "Jerad al-Bahr," or "Locust of the Sea," are caught and eaten; they do not come near the land but keep to the open. The remarkable scabbard or ribbon fish, with its narrow attenuated body of a bright silvery colour, is esteemed by the natives as food, but is disliked as it is said to be very destructive to small fish; it is very fragile and easily separates on being taken up. The tobacco pipe or gar fish, called by the Arabs "Anfaloos," has a very singular appearance, and is common and much eaten. Rock fish or Wrasse are common, some being highly coloured. The parrot fish is one of the above and is brilliantly tinted, taking its name from its beaklike mouth, and is an excellent table fish; the Arabs call it "Sinbala al-Himara," and it feeds on corals and is figured in Playfair's *Fishes of Zanzibar*. The pilot fish is small and striped and is said to precede ships and to guide sharks to their prey; it is eaten by the Arabs, who entertain many quaint notions respecting it, and is the *Naucrates Ductor* of naturalists. In Muscat harbour the surface is often disturbed by small fish jumping up, making the water appear

as if in a state of ebullition ; this commotion is caused by a shoal of sardines or other fish being pursued by larger ones, such as the bonito. Flat fish are less abundant in this sea than most other kinds and the Arabs are not partial to them, and Dr. Day found six species of sole at Gwader on the Mekran coast.

Among the curiosities of the sea to be observed in these parts is the Diodon or porcupine fish. It is said to raise and depress its spines or expand itself to double its size, and croak ; the Arabs deem them unlucky and blind them but do not kill them ; they call them " Abu Shokh " or " Father of Thorns." The sucking fish or Remora has suckers on the top of its head, formed by twenty-three plates ; the Arabs say that it derives nutriment from the shark's body when it attaches itself to that animal. Fabulous stories are told of its being used for catching turtle by means of a line attached to its tail, and it is mentioned by the historian Al-Mesoodi, and still bears the same name among the fisher-folk, Lizzak. One of the most curious fish to be found in these seas is the box fish, which is also known as trunk, coffer or tortoise fish. Its scales and skin being indurated and flattened out until the animal assumes a square or triangular shape ; some species have horns sticking out in front for additional protection ; these are called by the fishermen " Al-Bakr " or " the Cow." They are all of small size and move very slowly in the water, the native boys catching them easily by hand ; their coloration is often very pretty. Another curious fish is the file or trigger fish, found in the harbour, which feeds on corals and shell fish, having a sharp rough spine on its back, which is locked by a second spine, which must be depressed before the first will go down. The voracious Muræna, which generally is found in crevices of the rocks on this coast and lives on crabs and other crustaceans, is very common and attains a length of five or six feet ; it has powerful jaws and strong teeth and can give a nasty wound. The torpedo or electric ray resembles the skate and is three feet long, which gives a powerful shock when attacking its prey ; many are caught in nets and thrown away.

Some fish have quaint names given to them by the Arabs. The Chetedon is called " Bint Nakhado " (" The Captain's

Daughter"); another fish is known as the "Seer's Fish's Cousin" (Bin Amara Kunud), while another is the "Father of Butter" (Abu Laban); a fourth is styled "Father of Feathers" (Abu Reesh).

I may add to the note on Marine Fauna of Eastern Arabia that there are seven species of fresh-water fish in the wadis and water-courses of Oman. These fish are generally known as "Sudd," but each species has a separate name. These fish are very plentiful, even in the hot springs and rivulets, of which there are so many ranging from 102° to 112° Fahr.

Lower Order of Marine Fauna.

Among the lower forms of Marine Fauna the squids or cuttle fish are very abundant, and form the chief food of the sperm whale. The Arabs aver that they reach a large size, being known as "Kathak Tenka," and are esteemed a great delicacy and much eaten. Crabs and spiny crayfish are found in the vicinity of Muscat, but are not much eaten by the Arabs. Nothing is more wonderful to those who explore the depths of the sea than the immense wealth of flowerlike objects of exquisite beauty hidden in its recesses, such as anemones, corals and lilies, all of the animal kingdom in contrast to the flowers of the earth which are vegetable. The Arab coast abounds in these lovely creations of all colours and varieties of form, which can be seen clearly in the pellucid sea. The beautifully coloured Portuguese man-of-war is abundant in these seas and can inflict a very stinging pain, if incautiously handled; it feeds on fish, which it kills with its tentacles. On one occasion the mate of a merchant vessel lying in Muscat harbour was rendered insensible for some hours by coming in contact with one of these animals while swimming in the harbour.

In the year 1886 a small trawl was used to dredge the floor of the sea at Muscat and specimens of starfish, brittle stars, etc., were brought up.

Luminosity.

The luminosity or phosphorescence of the sea observable in these parts is a remarkable sight and can generally be seen to the best advantage in a gale. It is caused by some forms of protozoa and

presents a magnificent spectacle. The crest of each wave as it breaks on the rocks sparkles brilliantly and appears like a sheet of molten silver producing a most marvellous and fascinating sight. In passing near the rocks by night in a boat, the phenomena may be seen to great perfection, the brightness of the phosphorescence lighting up the surrounding objects, each splash of the oars giving a fresh burst of radiance; sometimes with a gale blowing the rocks around seem alive with flame.

Shipbuilding.

Shipbuilding is carried on at several ports of the Oman coast, but chiefly at Muttrah and Soor, the majority of the carpenters being Indians from Cutch who are very good workmen; the timber coming principally from Malabar, and comprises teak, puna, and jackwood.

A badan costs about four dollars per cubit and a large one can be built by three carpenters in a month. Cables are nearly always of coir and are manufactured at Muttrah and other places. The best cotton canvas comes from Al-Bahrain, but Sôhar, Majis and several other towns produce it in a considerable quantity.

The vessels on the Oman coast may be divided broadly into two classes, each distinguishable by their build. The larger ones styled bughlas trade to foreign ports, while the smaller craft, viz., bateels, zaimas, badans, etc., are intended for the coasting or home trade. The former has a high square stern and often a poop, the latter being whaler-built to break the surf, and generally half-decked. The rig is in all cases of one type; this is the lateen sail or a modification of it, there being but one mast raking forward.

The bughla, which is the largest kind of vessel now used, trades to Bombay, Gulf of Bengal, East Africa and the Red Sea. Of the smaller or coasting craft the two largest are the bateel and the zaima, the former having a singular figurehead like a club and averaging from 100 to 200 tons, but the most remarkable, numerous, and generally useful craft in this class is the badan, which, from its elegance of architecture and perfect adaptation to local requirements, deserves more notice. It is twenty to thirty-five feet in

length and from ten to twenty tons, built of thin teakwood planks with jackwood topstreak. They have very fine lines and have a double keel, which forms a narrow flat bottom to enable them to stand upright when beached; the keel is slightly curved up at each end so that when afloat the stem and stern barely touch the surface of the water. The deck is a light movable structure formed of bamboos or date sticks laid athwart and laced together with string. It is carvel built and has a single lofty mast carrying a large spread of sail, which enables her to slip through the water with amazing rapidity. Having, however, no depth of keel and being narrow in the waist the badan has no hold on the water and is easily blown over by sudden squalls and land gusts, when plying along the shore. Being provided with oars, the crew are able to row in rough weather, but accidents frequently occur nevertheless.

The badan is smeared with fish oil and looks as if varnished, but it has become customary now to nail them together instead of sewing them with coir as formerly; probably it is the trankies of old writers. A rough rowboat, in imitation of the European type, is used, called "Mashwa," a corruption of the Indian word for fishing-boat, and one of them may be found on board every bughla.

At Muscat the natives use the "Hoorie," a canoe or dugout made of a single tree and imported from the Malabar coast.

On the Batineh coast, where there is no good shelter for small vessels and where the surf is often heavy, we find a primitive kind of surf-boat. This boat is called "shasha" and is an illustration of the singular ingenuity with which the Arab adapts the materials he has at hand to the wants and necessities of his life and avocation. It is made solely of date sticks, two bunches of which are tied together at the small end to form the stem, the thick ends being joined to form the skeleton of the boat, which is filled up with palm bark and coconut fibre; they are about twelve feet long and can only hold one or two men, who sit in it half immersed in the water. Though apparently very fragile they are so elastic that they stand the heaviest surf and are used for fishing and for communicating with native craft anchored off shore.

A sort of catamaran is used at Muscat by the Socotrians who visit that port during the fishing season; it is called "Ramas" and is made of three logs about six feet long, the central one being the longest and propelled by a double paddle.

The largest vessels used in former times were the kalba and dhow, but both vessels are now extinct. The kalba was the earlier type and of peculiar architecture and was succeeded by the dhow. The dhow had a high stern and poop projecting considerably over the rudder and was frequently of large size; the war or piratical dhow of the nineteenth century carried, it is said, 400 men and forty or fifty guns. The last dhow seen by me in the Gulf belonged to Al-Bahrain and was painted with two tiers of ports; the yards of these vessels were called "Formel" by the Arabs, and those dhows in former times were of prodigious length; Wellsted measured one 140 feet long.

The famous pearl bank, which extends along the greater portion of the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf, from Kwait to Shargah, a distance of about 330 miles, has been fished from time immemorial and appears to be as extensive, productive, and important as ever. The right of pearl fishing is enjoyed by all the dwellers on the shores of the Gulf, but custom has imposed certain limitations on these rights, and the Arabs taking the largest share in the industry are those pertaining to the Shaikhdoms of Al-Bahrain and to the Chiefs on the Pirate coast, the former extending from Al-Katr to Kateef and the latter usually extending from Shargah to the Island of Hallool. It may be said that this industry forms the support of the Arabs on the western shore of the Gulf; the number of boats employed has been variously estimated at from 3,000 to 5,000, and the number of men at from 27,000 to 40,000. The sterile nature of the land adjacent to the Pearl coast, precluding the people having recourse to agriculture as a means of subsistence except in a minor degree, has made them employment on the sea, and they find their livelihood in pearl fishing and ordinary fishing, and trading with other ports. The following notes on the subject of the pearl fishing are gathered from personal observation as well as from the papers of Wilson, Wellsted, Whitelock, Pelly and Durand.

The richest banks are in the proximity of the Island of Al-Bahrain, which send 2,500 boats to the fishery. The Pirate coast comes next in the enterprise, the towns of which send about 1,500 boats. The coast dwellers from Kateef to Kwait and the Persian ports hold the remaining banks. The predatory and pugnacious propensities of the Arabs would lead to incessant war and aggressions were it not for the maritime truce, which was made with the chiefs after the suppression of piracy in 1819. By the treaties or truces made in 1820 and in 1853 the chiefs engaged to refrain from warfare by sea altogether and to refer their disputes to the British Resident. Under vigilant supervision the treaty has been well maintained and breaches of the peace have occurred but rarely.

A little pearl fishing takes place in the spring and autumn, but the principal season is from June to September, and during these three months the thousands of boats assembled on the banks present a most lively and curious spectacle. In the winter months the sea is too cold and the weather too rough and tempestuous either for pearl diving or ordinary fishing, but in the hot weather the sea is warm and calm and the divers experience no inconvenience. The management and profits of the pearl trade are entirely in the hands of Hindoo and Khoja merchants, who reside in Bahrain, the towns on the Pirate coast, and at Lingah and Muscat. These astute traders not only own most of the boats but advance provisions, clothes, and other necessaries to the pearl fishers at exorbitant prices and receive the whole produce of the industry, which they thus contrive to turn almost entirely to their own profit and advantage.

The system of fishing employed by the Arabs is extremely simple and primitive, the oysters being picked up by hand on the floor of the sea and brought to the shore in small boats ; the use of dredgers and trawling nets is entirely unknown.

The depth of water in which the divers' operations take place is usually from twenty-five to fifty feet, but as some of the richest banks are much deeper, the divers on them may have to descend 100 feet ; the nature of the ground on which the oysters lie differs considerably, being either sand, rock, or loose coral. The boats contain

from five to fifteen men with an average of nine, composed of the Nakhoda or captain, four divers called ghoass, and four rope haulers. On arriving at the bank, the divers descend by means of a heavy stone attached to a rope and begin at once to collect the oysters and put them in a bag, basket or net, suspended from the waist or neck ; they are able to pick up from eight to fifteen oysters, and on jerking the rope are hauled up to the boat. The diver remains down from half a minute to two minutes, and takes a rest before he repeats the exertions, his fingers being sometimes protected by leather tips, and his nostrils are always closed by pincers of bone, horn, or wood.

As soon as the boat is full of oysters the Captain sails to a sandy islet, where the oysters are exposed in the sun until they rot, when the pearls are gathered from the shells. Of these pearl-bearing oysters three varieties are recognized by the Arabs, the best of which is called Maha.

The shark is not regarded by the divers as an enemy and they pay no attention to it as it does not molest them, and the swordfish is perfectly harmless, but they greatly dread the sawfish, a single blow from which will sometimes cut them nearly in two.

The pearls when collected are taken by the Captain of the boat to the Hindoo trader, who purchases them at his own valuation, which is of course far below the market price, and the balance, after deduction of the trader's claims for provisions, etc., is then paid over to the Nakhoda and crew, who, being unable to judge of the value themselves, and being, moreover, in his debt most likely, are helpless in the matter and obtain scant remuneration for the toil and sufferings they have undergone. The fishers have, however, on the whole an easy time of it, as they are generally idle during the cold weather. No wages are paid to the crew, but the custom is to divide the profits as follows : The Captain takes one-fifth, the divers receive three-tenths, the ropemen two-tenths, while three-tenths are left for provisioning the boat during the season. The Revenue derived by the Arab Chiefs from the pearl fishery is considerable, as they levy taxes on the men employed as well as on the boats. One of these taxes is called " Nob," the other is called " Terass." The pearl merchant,

on receiving his quota of pearls from his client at the end of the season, proceeds to sort them by passing them through copper sieves, by which they are separated into six sizes, after which they are again divided according to colour, weight, etc. The globular concretions of nacre, which are called pearls, are formed in the body of the animal; but by the natives the pearls are considered to be formed by successive skins or layers of nacre, superimposed one upon another, some having five or six such folds, while others have as many as eight.

The produce of the oyster beds is subject to wide fluctuation from year to year, and it is difficult to estimate with any approximate accuracy the average value of the yield, but enquiries and comparison of customs returns lead one to infer that it may vary from £500,000 to £750,000 sterling per annum. To judge from the account written by Parsons, who wrote in 1775, it appears that the pearl fishery seems to have been carried on at that time in a less methodical and systematic manner than at present, and the men were in receipt of wages instead of working independently.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIBES OF THE PERSIAN GULF.

THE following notes on the tribes of the Persian Gulf are appended with much diffidence, and no one can be more conscious than myself of the inadequate way in which they are here treated, but the information may serve as a groundwork to build on and furnish a more complete and trustworthy account of their history, condition, locality, etc.

ORIGIN OF TRIBES.

The earliest colonists of the peninsula of Arabia appear to have been the Cushites, who were succeeded in the north by the Ishmaelites and Adnanites, and in the south by the Kahtanites. These races have in historical times divided Arabia into two distinct political communities or factions and are known under various names; the northern race being called Adnanis, Maaddic or Nizar, and the Southern Kahtanite or Yemenite. The Ishmaelites, however, considered as a separate race, had vanished from Northern Arabia 200 years before Islam, and were, according to the testimony of the Bible and their own name, less akin to the Arabs than to the Hebrews, but how they decayed we know not. Perhaps by war, perhaps by pestilence, or they mingled with other tribes and thus became absorbed. There are no Ishmaelites now in Arabia. Maad is said by Abul Feda to be contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar, who died 560 B.C., but most of the grand old tribes boast of a very high antiquity, and indeed the dates ascribed to their eponyms are more recent by centuries than the tribes themselves; the terms Adnani or Maaddic being merely a convenient way of distinguishing them.

The comprehensive and complicated scheme of the Arab genealogists may be viewed as trustworthy on the whole, but it abounds with

inconsistencies and contradictions, having been denounced by some European scholars and applauded by others, and they differ about it as widely as the Arab genealogists conflict with one another.

It must be remembered that the Arabs, whose historic memory and traditions excel those of all other nations, have a profound faith in, and veneration for, their pedigree, and have handed down the same story, perhaps, for thousands of years, from father to son.

It was after Mohammed's time that the more elaborate and artificial ideas in tracing pedigrees permeated among the Arabs, who have been in their genealogies as painstaking and successful as they have in their biographies, which are the glory of Arab literature.

The first immigration into Oman may have been from Africa either direct or through the Yemen, then came the northern or Adnani race, and thirdly, the second immigration from the Yemen, that of the Azdites, after the bursting of the dam at Mareb. The tribes of Oman are thus derivable from the two main stocks—Kahtanite and Adnani—the former predominating. In true Semitic spirit these two groups have ever been in open and undisguised antagonism, keeping the country in perpetual turmoil and disruption through their jealous feuds and hatreds, and this undying enmity is the key to the internal history of the land.

Without some knowledge of Arab ethnology and genealogy it is impossible to understand the ever-changing, kaleidoscopic variations of the political combinations and coalitions that form so salient a feature in the history of a people divided into two great factions, distinct from each other in race, politics, and sentiment, but one in speech and social law.

The large tribes of Oman are mostly grouped together in suff, as it is termed ; that is to say, in league in each district according to politics for the purpose of supporting each other when attacked, while the weaker tribes are compelled to place themselves in cliency to those more powerful. These weak tribes, however, are accustomed to maintain themselves genealogically distinct and do not fuse with the one to which they are in cliency. These groups of tribes in suff or league are often in coalition with similar groups of the same faction

in other districts, being all banded together, Hinawi or Ghafiri, for protection by the ties of kinship, the strongest of all ties.

In Oman the geographical distribution of the tribes has much to do with the causes of strife and internecine war, and new alliances are formed among tribes of different lineage, against coalitions in other districts, but the new groupings often become complicated. The Arabs, being an envious and revengeful race, are so pugnacious and predatory that war becomes one of the chief occupations of life.

Classification of Tribes.

According to Arab genealogists the classification of tribes is very elaborate and extends to twelve or more grades and ramifications, for which there are no corresponding names in our language. The relative order and value, however, of these divisions are very uncertain as the authorities differ on the subject.

In Oman the system adopted is more than ordinarily simple and the divisions are very few. The genealogists appear to make a distinction, but no real difference, between the various sorts of tribes which are differentiated by names. The system seems to be merely a numerical scale in which the trunks or stocks come first and then the smaller branches, but there is a wide divergence as to the order in which these names should come.

The following is a list of some of the more important grades — Jadtham, Jamhoor, Shaab, Kabeela, Amara, Batn, Asheera, Faseela, Rahat, Fakhth, etc.

The above names are, however, but rarely used in Oman, where a tribe is called Taifa and is simply subdivided into fakhths, or thighs, which are again subdivided into Baits or Batoons. In tribal nomenclature the names included those of animals, plants, divinities, as well as planetary and stellar bodies, many of which still exist and the use of which is probably of more remote antiquity than the adoption of men's names. The number of female eponyms in the genealogies is large, and this is variously accounted for. In Oman noble tribes and inferior ones and many men have female names.

SHAIKHS.

The shaikh is regarded as the father of his tribe and the system of government is simply patriarchal; even the Sultan of Muscat is only *primus inter pares*. Generally each fakhth, or subdivision, has its own shaikh, who considers himself independent of the others, but in almost every case one of these subdivisional shaikhs takes rank above, and has superior power to, the others, especially in time of war. It must be noted, however, that there are a few shaikhs in Oman known as Temeemehs, who possess real power over their people and wield it despotically. The tribes which are thus governed are the Beni Ryam, the Jenebeh, the Beni Ali, the Beni Yas, the Beni Ghafir, etc.

The shaikhship is usually hereditary and is assumed by the eldest son, unless he be incapable, on the death of the father; the son succeeds even if he be a mere youth, and I have more than once seen a boy of twelve or fourteen dictating and giving orders to his own people who obeyed him unhesitatingly. But in time of war another hand would, no doubt, take the reins. In the administration of justice the decisions of the shaikh are governed by custom and the Koran, and so long as he observes these laws the people obey him loyally. In peace time, however, his authority is often aided or checked by a consultative council of elders, which assists him to settle most of the general affairs of the tribe or subdivision. Quarrels between members of different tribes, especially money disputes, are usually referred to the nearest Kadhi or judge, who is appointed and paid by the central Government. In time of war he is undisputed leader of his people and much depends on his character, sagacity and bravery. No shaikh has a fixed allowance, and his means are fluctuating and precarious. He receives not only contributions from his people, but has his own estates, camels, or ships, as the case may be, besides Nafaa from the Sultan when the shaikh quits Muscat. Mediation often fails and fighting then results, the parties not resting satisfied without bloodshed. After a battle, intervention is again resorted to, and a salfa—or truce—is arranged for a few months or a year. Subsequently, if peace has not been concluded, hostilities are

renewed. In war, the tribes rouse and excite themselves by boasting their descent and the renown and deeds of their ancestors. At the same time they irritate their enemies by shouting out opprobrious epithets, usually some name or expression peculiarly obnoxious to it.

Tribes of Oman.

The Beni Adi and *Howkeyn* are Sunni by religion and occupy Rostak; they number about 1,000.

The Beni Ali are Ibadhis by religion and are in suff with the Beni Yas and at feud with Beni Ghafir. They inhabit the Wady Ahin under Jebel Wakba near Yenkal, also Wady Feda, numbering about 7,000. Their Temeemeh, or Shaikh, is one of the four despotic shaikhs of Oman. He is the second son, the elder son being set aside as his mother was of another tribe; the tribe have always been loyal supporters of the present dynasty.

The Al-Amoor are Hinawis and dwell at Saham in the Batineh; it is a small tribe of about fifty souls.

The Beni Araba are Ibadhi by religion and are a batn of the Aus tribe, and can trace up to their Ameer and Kaid, Mesood bin Rashid bin Abdulla bin Araba al-Ausi. This tribe, together with the Nedabiyyeen and Rehbiyeen, are of one stock, numbering about 5,000, and dwell in the district of Oman and Sabal, and have twenty-four fakhths.

The Awamir are both Bedoo and Ibadhi, are of Maaddic stock, and claim descent from Amr bin Saasaa, but are now Hinawi. The Bedouin and larger portion of this tribe roam the desert as far as Dhofar, but the settled portion of the tribe occupy a group of twelve villages near Nezwa in Oman Proper, namely Kuriatain, Al-Hamedhea, Al-Akil, Al-Saleeba, Al-Hadeed, Hamadheeym, Shafaa, Al-Seea, Al-Habl, Al-Hadeed, Al-Kilaa, Sook al-Kadeeri and Al-Kharma; they number about 1,200 or 1,400 souls and the shaikhs reside at Kuriatain. The Bedouins are very wild and savage and are said to speak a dialect of their own. The Awamir are at feud with the Jenebeh and have about thirty fakhths.

The Azeez are a small tribe of 200 who reside at Dhank in Al-Dhahireh.

The Beni Azzan, a small Ghafiri tribe, who reside at Nakhl.

The Beni Battash is a large Hinawi tribe, Ibadhi by religion, occupying the Kuriyat district outside the Devil's Gap ; their chief villages being Al-Mizara, Hail, and Kuriyat. They are said to be of Nadhr stock and to be a branch of the Yal, and number about 10,000 souls ; are industrious and peaceable, and brave and warlike under provocation. In former times they used to breed horses for the Indian market, for which the rich pasture lands near Hail offered considerable facilities ; they are subdivided into nine fakhths and are at feud with the Siabeyeen ; some say the Battash are Himyarite.

The Al-Bawareh are Sunni by religion and Hinawi in politics, numbering 1,500 all told and dwell at Otaiba in the Batineh.

The Bedeia are Sunni by religion and number about 1,000, dwelling in the Wady Hatta in the Batineh.

The Yal Beraik are partly Sunni and partly Ibadhi, belonging to the Hinawi faction and number 1,200 ; they reside in the Batineh at Shirs and Kasbiyet Yal Beraik.

The Beni Bu Ali are Ghafiri in politics, being a branch of the great Adnani tribe Beni Temeem, which is now reduced to a few widely scattered remnants. The Beni Bu Ali may have immigrated from Bahrain, where the Beni Temeem were formerly strong. They number about 9,000 and occupy Soor, Al-Ashkera and the Wady Beni Khalid in the Sharkiya, and are both Bedouin and Hadhr, the former being owners of camels and goats, while those in Soor and Al-Ashkera are mostly seafarers and traders. Though still one of the most influential Ghafiri tribes in Al-Sharkiya they do not now occupy the prominent position that was theirs before their reduction in 1821.

The Beni Bu Hassan is a Hinawi tribe in Jaalan and is Ibadhi by religion, deriving from Shems, and number about 10,000. They are in suff, or alliance, with the Al-Howajir and at feud with the Beni Bu Ali, with whom their contests are many and severe ; the Mesakera tribe sometimes mediating between them. Their chief town is Belad Beni Bu Hassan, where they cultivate dates and grain. Possessing very few camels they have to borrow these animals when

on the warpath with the Beni Bu Ali. The tribe is divided into twelve fakhths and four small tribes in cliency, viz., Beni Ali al-Fitta, Masbafira, and two others. The leadership at this time is not under one head but is divided and is in the hands of three shaikhs.

The Al-Bida is Ghafiri in politics and occupies Doot in Al-Dhahireh, numbering about 500 souls.

The Al-Dahamanieh is Maaddic by descent and Sunnite by religion ; but Hinawi in politics. They occupy the Wady Koor in Al-Hajar and number about 800.

The Al-Dahamieh is the remnant of a tribe numbering about sixty, who dwell at Burka on the Batineh coast and are Ghafiris.

The Derimheh is a remnant of a tribe residing at Zikki, numbering only about 100 and Hinawi in politics.

The Al-Deroo are Wilad Maalla and are partly Ibadhi and partly Sunni by religion ; they are widely scattered, the larger portion being at Tenan in Al-Dhahireh, and are divided into twenty-four fakhths, numbering about 16,000 altogether. A few of them are settled but the greater part are Bedouins, and are, next to the Al-Waheebeh, the largest rearers of camels in Oman and roam the desert to a great distance to pasture them. The Deroo are lawless and unruly and no rising of the Sharkiya tribes takes place without the Deroo taking a prominent share therein ; in politics they are Ghafiri.

The Al-Dhahone is a small Ghafiri tribe residing near Awabi and numbering altogether about 500; being unmentioned by Sir E. Ross they may be only a subtribe.

The Al-Dhowahir, a tribe of Al-Dhahireh, belonging to the Hinawi faction and occupying the country at Ain and Beraimi, numbering about 4,000 or 5,000, and is at feud with the Al-Naeen tribe.

The Beni Eesa are Ibadhi by religion, numbering about 3,000, are Ghafiri in politics and are at feud with the Beni Ali. They dwell in the Wady Ahin in the provinces of Al-Hajar and Al-Batineh.

The Al-Fezara, a small tribe of 500 souls, Sunni by religion and Hinawi in politics, occupying the town of Makai in the Batineh ; they are of ancient stock.

The Al-Ghafai, a small tribe, numbering about 250 souls, occupying the village of Bu Abali in the Batineh, who are Ibadhi by religion but Hinawi in politics.

The Beni Ghafir are Wilad Miyahaba, being Adnani by descent who migrated into Oman from Nejd. It numbers about 5,000 and occupies the great valley to which it has given its name, the localities of Bahila, Aridh, Al-Dereez, Al-Ghabbi, Al-Ainan, etc.; they are partly Sunni and partly Ibadhi. The tribe has a reputation for valour and propensity and is at feud with eight other tribes, namely, Beni Ali, Al-Bida, Al-Ibriyeen, Beni Kelban, Yakeeb, Beni Zeed and others. Of the two great political factions in Oman, the Yemen and Nizar, the latter has become known for the last two centuries by the name of this tribe, the Ghafir. This change was due to the ascendancy of its then leader, Mohammed bin Nasir, who afterwards became Imam. Mohammed bin Nasir was an Attoobee, a small tribe in cliency to the Beni Ghafir, and through his military genius more than by the superiority of its strength or courage, the tribe became so prominent. It does not at present hold any dominant influence in that faction over the other tribes composing it, though the Shaikh of the Beni Ghafir is also the Temeemeh of all the Ghafiri tribes. The present Shaikh Barghash resides at Bahila.

The Al-Ghowarid, a small tribe of about 250 souls, residing at Bu Abali in the Batineh; they are Ibadhi by religion and belong to the Hinawi faction, being of Yemenite descent.

The Beni Hilal are generally classed as a separate tribe but a very weak one and have little influence. They are Ghafiri by faction and number about 1,000, dwelling at Bahila and Nezwa.

The Al-Hinadis are Ibadhi by religion and 1,200 strong, dwelling in the Batineh and belonging to the Hinawi faction.

The Beni Hina are of Azdite descent, being Wilad Zikree from Selami bin Malik bin Fahm, one of whose descendants was their patronym Hina. It is a large tribe numbering 20,000 and has many allies and much influence, and is widely distributed, inhabiting Nezwa, Ghumr, Belad Sait in the Wady Semail, the towns of Fanja, Bidbid, Kilwa, and Seroor, etc. For the past 200 years this tribe

has given its name to the Yemenite faction owing to the prominence of their former leader Khalf al-Kuseir or the dwarf, a descendant of whom is now the Temeemeh. In religion they are Ibadhi, and are at feud with the Ibriyeen.

The Al-Hishm occupies the Wady Beni Khalid in Jaalan, where they have six villages, Kamil, Seef, Hamaiah, Taiwaa, Bowaridh, and Sabt. The Hishm are paramount in the Wady Beni Khalid and the other tribes dwelling there have to pay taxes to them. They are all Hadhr and raise fruit and grain and number about 4,000, but are Ghafiri in politics and at feud with the Hejrieen ; the tribe is partly Sunni and partly Ibadhi, and divided into twelve fakhths.

The Al-Haboos is, perhaps, the largest tribe in the Sharkiya next to the Al-Waheebeh and occupies Maikaiba in the Wady Andam, claiming descent from Habs and numbering about 25,000 souls, being divided into eleven fakhths. They are mostly Bedouins but are becoming settled and industrious and cultivating the land, also rearing camels. They always join, but do not take a leading part, in Sharkiya coalitions, and are at feud with the Nedabiyyeen and Rehbiyeen tribes, and by religion are Ibadhi.

The Yal Hamad dwell at Ghareefa in the Batineh and number about 1,000, being Ibadhi and Hinawi.

The Beni Hammad are Sunni and Hinawi, numbering about 2,000 and occupy Soor Hassain in the Batineh.

The Al-Hadiyeen are Ibadhi and Hinawi, numbering about 2,000 and residing in the Wady Andam in the Sharkiya.

The Beni Harras are Ibadhi and Ghafiri, claiming to be Wilad Waid and numbering 15,000 ; they reside chiefly at Nakhl.

The Al-Harth are Ibadhi by religion and dwell at Ibra, Dereez, and Kabil and in the district of Al-Bediyeh in the Sharkiya ; their Azwa is Wilad Yahmad, and they are a branch of the Beni Temeem but Hinawi in politics. The Harth tribe is one of the richest and most influential in the eastern part of Oman, being mostly engaged in cultivation and trade, many having migrated to Zanzibar where they have become possessed of substance and position. There are five petty clans in cliency to the Harth who are called the Bedouins

of the Harth ; these being divided into seventeen fakhths. Their old Temeemeh in 1894 was a fanatical Metowwa, who gave much trouble to H.H. Seyyid Turkee ; the Temeemeh resided at Kabil and was succeeded by his son. The Harth number about 10,000 souls and are at feud with the Al-Mesakera.

The Hasreet are not, strictly speaking, an Oman tribe, but extend into Oman from Hadhramaut, being a branch of the great Mahra family. They are Sunni by religion and reckon themselves as Ghafiris.

The Beni Hassan are Ibadhi by religion and dwell in the neighbourhood of Muscat, occupying Rowi, Wady Bosher, and Haboobaya, numbering about 7,000 souls and are Hinawis.

The Hedadiba are a Hinawi tribe of 5,000 souls, occupying Fanja and Bidbid in the Wady Semail ; a few also dwell at Shirs in the Batineh ; they are Ibadhi by religion.

The Al-Hejrieen are Wilad Eesa, being Ibadhi by religion and at feud with the Hishm, numbering about 15,000 in the Sharkiya, where they are one of the chief tribes. Though chiefly Hadhr, they have many Bedouins and rear many camels ; is a prosperous and well-to-do tribe, trading to Bombay and Zanzibar. In old days it was more important and strenuously resisted the Wahabee invasion. In 1810 Mutlak's force was suddenly attacked by the Hejrieen in the Sharkiya and driven out of the country, Mutlak being killed in the encounter. In 1825, however, Saeed bin Mutlak completely defeated them and the tribe has never been able to recover its former strength and position ; they are Hinawi in politics.

The Hikman are Sunni by religion and occupy Mahot and the coast of the Bahr al-Hadri, numbering about 5,000 souls, and belong to the Ghafiri faction.

The Al-Howâjir is a small tribe and resides in Soor and Jena in the Sharkiya, numbering about 3,000 and are Ibadhis by religion but Hinawi in politics.

The Al-Howasina are Wilad Hosin and are, of course, Hinawi, inhabiting the Wady Howasina, Khaboora, and Ghazain. In strength they may be 10,000 or 12,000 and are Ibadhis, and are at feud with the Beni Omar.

The Al-Hoyood inhabit Dhiyam in the Batineh, numbering about 1,500, and are Ibadhi by religion but belong to the Hinawi faction.

The Al-Ibriyeen, a large and influential Hadhr tribe of Maaddic origin, occupying Bahila, Awabi, Hamra, Araki, and Irahl. They are generally well behaved and a peaceable tribe, numbering 8,000 souls. The Al-Ibriyeen are Ibadhi and belong to the Ghafiri faction ; cultivating corn and dates and at feud with the Beni Hina.

The Beni Jabir are Wilad Dhobyan, being of the stock of Ghatafan and claiming descent through the Dhobyan, one of the parties of the war of Dahis, and probably immigrated into Oman before the time of Islam. This is a very large and scattered tribe inhabiting Jebel Jabir and the valleys named after them, including the towns of Al-Tow, Seija, Kilhat, Dhibab, Taiwee, and others, numbering 30,000, divided into twenty-one septs, which are all Hadhr and have no Bedouins, and from their numerical strength have some weight. They are hereditary enemies of the Beni Ruwaihah and are Ibadhis, belonging to the Ghafiri faction.

The Beni Kaab, in Irak, numbers about 8,000 and descend from the stock of Hamdan ; in Oman there is a section of about 1,000, occupying Maddheh in Al-Jow and the Wady Koor. They are Sunnis by religion and are, of course, Ghafiris.

The Al-Kar are a small tribe of Kahtanite extraction, numbering about 200 souls, and residing at Khor Milh in the Batineh ; they are Sunni by religion and are Hinawi.

The Al-Bu Kereem are of the Ibadhi faith and dwell at Al-Hejaira and Dhiyam in the Batineh, numbering 4,000, and are Hinawis.

The Beni Kattab are Wilad Dhabba and of Maaddic origin, occupying Dhank and Aflaj in Al-Dhahireh, numbering about 2,000. They are Sunni by religion and Ghafiris and are at feud with the Beni Mezroon. This is a predatory Bedouin tribe and is now divided into two sections, north and south, the southern is called Keswani ; these sections regard each other with jealousy and do not always act in unison. The Batineh is their favourite hunting ground and

their raids and forays are frequent; the famous bandit, Walad Metowwa, belonged to this tribe, also the name of the Kattab is a terror to the Batineh folk.

The Beni Kelban are partly Sunni and partly Ibadhi, numbering 5,000 approximately, and dwell at Makiniyat in Al-Dhahireh. The tribe is Ghafiri and is at feud with the Beni Ghafir.

The Al-Jahadim are Wilad Jahdim and are Hinawi or Yemenite, numbering about 1,500 souls, and occupy Semed al-Shan in the Sharkiya; by religion they are Ibadhi.

The Al-Jenebeh are Jabir of Kahtanite origin, but are now classed as Ghafiris. This is the largest seafaring tribe in Oman, and range further west than any other except the Al-Awamir, extending from the port of Soor along the coast to Kooria Mooria Bay. They number about 30,000 and have four divisions, and are subdivided into many baits, or houses. The Temeemeh is Shaikh Nasir bin Khamees, who is regarded with veneration and has despotic power, residing with a portion of the tribe near Nezwa, and takes 25 per cent. on bags of dates exported by the tribe. The Al-Jenebeh own many boats and about 100 seagoing craft, trading to all ports in the Indian Ocean. The port of Soor used to be the chief landing place for slaves in Eastern Arabia, and the Soories, the name under which the Jenebeh are best known, were the terror of the Indian Ocean in the old days of piracy and slave trading. They are Sunni by religion, and are at feud with the Al-Waheebeh.

The Al-Jerad, or the Locust tribe, are Hinawi by faction and Ibadhi by religion, numbering about 3,000, and dwell at Abu Marijka and Al-Jerad in the Batineh.

The Al-Jiboor.—The remnant of an ancient tribe with which the late Sultan Seyyid Saeed was said to be connected. They number about fifty and dwell in the Wady Semail, and belong to the Ghafiri faction.

The Beni Khalid is a Sunni tribe occupying Umm al-Teifa in the Batineh, numbering about 2,000, and belonging to the Hinawi faction.

The Al-Khamees is also Hinawi and occupies Al-Khabba and Shaiba in the Batineh, numbering 4,000, and are Ibadhi by religion.

The Beni Kharoos number about 1,500, and occupy the Wady Beni Kharoos as well as Nakhl and Rostak in the Batineh ; they are Ibadhi by religion and are Ghafiris.

The Al-Khazeer.—A small tribe of about 1,000 residing at Nakhl. They are Ibadhi and Ghafiri.

The Al-Kinda is a Ghafiri tribe settled at Semed al-Kindes in Nezwa, numbering 500, and are Ibadhi by religion.

The Beni Kataïb is another Ghafiri tribe inhabiting the Wady Jezzi and numbering 5,000 ; they are Sunni by religion.

The Al-Kinood is also Ghafiri, numbering 6,000, and occupy Nezwa ; they may be part of another tribe.

The Al-Kowasim.—A powerful Maaddic tribe occupying the sea ports on the Pirate coast, viz., Ras al-Khyma and Khor Fakan on Cape Mussendom, and engaged principally in fishing. They are a branch of the great Maawal tribe occupying the Persian Coast from Burdistan to Bundar Abbas, and at one time in rebellion against Nadir Shah ; they are better known as the Joasmees and took a prominent part in the piratical enterprises of the Persian Gulf Arabs when they roamed the Indian Ocean plundering indiscriminately merchant vessels of all nations and murdering their crews. This took place from about 1770 to 1820, when their town, Ras al-Khyma, also called Julfar, and Al-Sirr, was destroyed, and piracy suppressed by an expedition sent for the purpose by the Indian Government. The Al-Kowasim number about 20,000 and has several small tribes in cliency to it. They are Sunni by religion and belong to the Ghafiri faction. The first Shaikh who followed a career of piracy was Rashid bin Muttar, and a short account of the Joasmee or Kowasim depredations is given elsewhere.

The Al-Maawal is Hinawi and occupies Wady Maawal and Khabba, numbering 15,000, and are Ibadhi. From about the fifth century of our era to the time of Islam this tribe occupied the position in Oman similar to that since held by the Nebhani, Yaareba, and Al-Bu Saeedis, in being the one to which the ruling family belonged. When the Azdite invasion of Oman took place in the second century we find Malik bin Fahm in command, whose pedigree is very uncertain.

The Julanda dynasty is, however, historical, and is mentioned in the Koran. The Maawal, to which tribe the Julanda are said to have belonged, have the merit of having introduced the faith of Islam into Eastern Arabia ; they perhaps derive from Maawal bin Hodan.

The Beni Mohareb number 500 and occupy the Wady Semail ; Ibadhi by religion, they are Ghafiri in politics.

The Al-Majanibya are Sunni by religion and Hinawi in politics, numbering about 1,000 and residing at Widam in the Batineh.

The Al-Mujayaha, a subdivision of the Beni Ghafir, from whom they separated after a quarrel, and became Hinawi, claiming descent from Hashim, the uncle of Mohammed ; they occupy Dereez and the Wady Rostak.

The Al-Makabeel are Sunni by religion, numbering 5,000 and occupy the Wady Makabeel near Sohar in the Batineh ; they belong to the Ghafiri faction.

The Al-Makharek are Ibadhi by religion and Ghafiri in politics, numbering about 3,000, and inhabiting the town of Adam in Oman Proper, where they hold possession of the fort. They are at feud with the Al-Bu Saeedis and skirmishes between these tribes are of constant occurrence, the fighting being suspended occasionally by a salfa or truce, arranged through the mediation of the Sultan of Muscat.

The Al-Marhafera are Ibadhi by religion and belong to the Hinawi faction, numbering about 6,000 or 7,000 souls, and dwell at Al-Mansfash in the Batineh.

The Al-Maihirifa are Hinawi in politics and number about 1,500, occupying Rafsa near Soor in the Sharkiya, and are Ibadhi by faith.

The Beni Mijlib, a small Ghafiri tribe dwelling at Semail, numbering about 300, and are in faith Ibadhi.

The Al-Minadhera are by faith Ibadhi, and though connected with the Hinawi faction are Adnani by descent, numbering 300, and dwell at Salaif in the Batineh and are at feud with the Suwafa tribe.

The Al-Manawera is a tribe belonging to the Hinawi faction, and numbers about 1,500, occupying the town of Al-Hadeed in the Batineh, and are by faith Ibadhi.

The Al-Merazek, a tribe of Adnani descent, though now belonging

to the Hinawi faction. It migrated from the Nejd to Mughoo, from whence it migrated to Oman, and now occupies the Wady Hammam and Soor al-Hiyan, numbering about 3,000, and is Sunni by religion.

The Al-Mesakera is a Ghafiri tribe inhabiting Ibra and Al-Yamedi in the Sharkiya. It numbers 8,000, and is divided into nineteen fakhths, is Ibadhi by religion, and is at feud with the Harth tribe.

The Beni Mezroon is a Ghafiri tribe of little account, dwelling at Rostak and Semail, numbering 500 and are Ibadhi by religion; they are at feud with the Beni Kaab and Beni Kattab.

The Al-Mowahkh is a Hinawi tribe residing at Ras al-Had in the Sharkiya. It numbers 4,000, and is Sunni by religion.

The Al-Mowalik numbers 600, and is Hinawi in politics.

The Al-Miyahebeh is not a distinct tribe but a subdivision of the Beni Ghafir, having separated about the time of Seyyid Thowaini's death. They are now ranked as Hinawi, the change of faction having resulted from a quarrel and fight with the body of the tribe, in which 200 men were killed. Being cast off by the other Ghafiri tribes, who gave them no sympathy nor protection, they joined the Hinawis. They now occupy Dereez and the Wady Rostak, numbering 5,000, and are Ibadhi by religion, and claim descent from Hashim, the uncle of Mohammed.

The Al-Naeen are the predominant Ghafiri tribe in the Al-Chahireh, numbering about 20,000 souls, but are very disunited and have several tribes in cliency. Though of Kahtanite descent, they now belong to the Ghafiri faction and are Sunni by religion; they inhabit Al-Beraimi, Dhank, Kabil, Senana, Hafeet, etc. They are a warlike and predatory race and plunder the Batineh with impunity, and are in suff with the Beni Ghafir and Ibriyeen, and at feud with the Beni Yas.

The Beni Nebhan are also of Kahtanite descent but belong to the Ghafiri faction, and this tribe supplied the ruling family of Oman. They number 400 and dwell at Semail and Bosher; they are Ibadhi by religion and are now an obscure and despised race.

The Al-Nedabiyyeen derive from Nedab bin Shums, of whom

they are a batn, or as Wüstenfeld says, from Nedab bin Hambra al-Hinoo bin Azd. They trace back to their Ameer and Kaid Saif bin Suliman bin Saeed al-Nedabi. They number 1,000, and are divided into three fakhths, occupying the Wady Akk, which they are subsidized to hold against the Sharkiya tribes. Though of Azdite descent they are now Ghafiri in politics, but Ibadhi by religion, and are at feud with the Haboos.

The Al-Nizar is an Adnani tribe, occupying one of the two walled Hujrahs at Zikki in Oman Proper, the other Hujrah being held by the Yemen tribe with whom the Nizar are constantly at feud and hostile. They number about 6,000 and are Ibadhi by religion. They are at feud also with the Beni Ruwaihah, and at Zikki fighting with the Yemen tribe is incessant, with an occasional truce.

The Al-Nowafil are Hinawi by faction and Ibadhi by religion, numbering 2,500, and occupy the villages of Shaaba, Widam, and Magees al-Nowafil in the Batineh.

The Beni Omar is a Ghafiri tribe and numbers 13,000, occupying Wady Howasina in the Batineh ; they are Ibadhi by religion.

The Yal Omair is a Ghafiri tribe residing at Mahyool in the Dhahireh ; they are Sunni by religion and are at feud with the Howasina and Makabeel.

The Al-Bu Rashid number about 5,000 and dwell at Al-Khodhra in the Batineh ; they are Ibadhi by religion and belong to the Hinawi faction.

The Beni Rasib are said to have sprung from Abdulla bin Wahab al-Rasibi, a companion of Ali bin Abu Talib. It was the first tribe which adopted the doctrines of Ibadh but are now followers of Abdul Wahab. They number 1,200 souls and dwell at Al-Wafi in Jaalan, and are in suff or league with the Beni Ali and Hishm tribes and at feud with the Beni Bu Hassan. In war they follow the fortunes of the Beni Bu Ali and have consistently supported Toorkee in late years. They are Hadhr and fruit growers, cultivating grapes, mangoes, etc., in abundance. They are not seafarers, and only have eighty camels in the tribe ; they intermarry with the Beni Bu Ali.

The Al-Rehbiyeen inhabit the Wadis Kahza and Akk, and number 8,000. They are Ibadhi by religion and Ghafiri by faction, and are at feud with the Haboos. They derive from Arhab bin Doam bin Malik bin Moawia bin Kaab bin Duman bin Bakil bin Goshem bin Kheiman bin Nauf bin Hamdan, and are divided into twenty-one fakhths.

The Beni Riyasa is a Ghafiri tribe, occupying Fezek in the Batineh, and numbers about 6,000 ; they are Sunni by religion.

The Beni Ryam, a powerful Hinawi clan, occupying Jebel Akhdar, their towns being Nezwa, Seek, Zikki, etc. They are now attached to the Ghafiri faction, though of Yemenite origin, and are a branch of the Kamar who left Yemen at a remote period with their cousins the Mahras towards the East, continuing, however, their march on Oman, where they seized the great mountain chain which they called after their own country, Radhwan. Hamdani tells us that Ryam was a house of Hamdan for pilgrimage of great sanctity and some of it existed to his day. It was on the top of the hill Atwa, and came from the country of Hamdan, the founder being Riyam bin Nahfan bin Tobba bin Zaid bin Amr bin Hamdan ; it was the seat of government, and before the gate was a courtyard in which were the figures of idols of the sun and moon, and when the King went out of his house his sight fell first on his idols. The tribe numbers about 14,000, and is Ibadhi by religion, but is divided into two broad sections, and the Temeemeh exercises real authority over the tribe ; they are at feud with the Beni Ruwaihah.

The Beni Ruwaihah.—This tribe is of the stock of Ghatafan, and is therefore of kindred blood with Dhobyan, who are now represented in Oman by the Beni Jabir. Though of Maaddic origin it is now included in the Hinawi faction, having changed side about two centuries ago. The Beni Ruwaihah claim to be a branch of the Koraid, as they derive from the Beni Hashim, who after arriving in Oman called themselves Hasham. Their proper name is Beni Abs, and they are often still spoken of as the Wilad Abs. This tribe deserves special notice from their remarkable history, and is one of the most recent immigrants into Oman, having entered Oman

about 1,400 years ago. The feud between this tribe and the Dhobyan arose in 563 A.D. about a horse race, and the war continued about forty years; the two tribes were neighbours and enemies in Oman, and the ancestral feud has survived to this day; the war of Dahis is one of the most famous in Arab history. Kais bin Zohair, Shaikh of the Abs, retired to Oman in A.D. 610 as a Christian monk and died, probably at Sohar. The Beni Ruwaihah occupy a fertile valley called after their own name, which extends from Zikki to Semail and contains thirty villages. Many of these villages have towers and fortlets, and the valley is commanded by the fort at Zikki, which is sometimes held by this tribe. Their number is from 18,000 to 20,000, and are divided into thirty fakhths, each of which has its own particular Shaikh as there is no Temeemeh; one of the Awamir fakhths is in cliency to this tribe and looks to them for protection. They are Ibadhi by religion and at feud with the Beni Jabir and the Beni Ryam.

The Yal Saad is the largest, but is by no means the most influential tribe in Oman, and comprises about 6,000 souls, divided into eight fakhths, and occupies a coast line in the Batineh about twenty-five miles in length in which are the villages of Muludda, Tharmud, Al-Khodhra, Tareef, Soor, Jirat, Widam, Soor al Hayiz, Soor al-Makinyat, Bu Abali, Al-Kart, and Batha al-Rakkas. The Yal Saad have many small tribes in cliency to them but do not bear a good reputation. They cultivate dates and corn, and own many vessels, and are said to treat their slaves harshly; they are Ibadhis and belong to the Hinawi faction.

The Beni Saada number about 500 and occupy Doot in Al-Dhahireh, are Sunni by religion and Ghafiri in politics, and is at feud with the Beni Ghafir.

The Al-Bu Saeed, an Azdite tribe inhabiting Oman Proper, where they dwell in the towns of Adam, Nezwa, Manh, Izz, Majood, etc.; there is also a small section in the Batineh. They are Ibadhi by religion and Hinawi in faction; the family of the present dynasty belongs to this tribe; the founder of the dynasty being Ahmed bin Saeed, who became Imam on the death of Belarab al-Yaareba in A.D. 1749.

The Abd al-Silaam, a small Hinawi tribe dwelling in the Batineh at Deil and numbering 300 souls being Sunni by religion.

The Al-Seririyeen, another Hinawi tribe, occupying Nakhl and numbering 400 ; they are Ibadhi by religion.

The Beni Shekail derive from Amr bin Saasaa and are consequently cousins of the Awamir ; they are now in different factions, the Beni Shekail being Ghafiri. They number 5,000 and inhabit Saifam, Ghabbi, Bahila, Basiya, etc., are Ibadhi by religion and are at feud with the Ibriyeen and in suff or alliance with the Beni Ghafir.

The Al-Sharkiyeen, a Ghafiri tribe, numbering 2,000 and occupying Wady Ham and Fajeere ; they are Sunni by religion.

The Al-Shemoos number 500 and dwell at Khor Hamman in the Batineh ; they are Sunni and Hinawi in politics.

The Al-Shihool or *Al Shihiyyeen,* a large tribe said to be of Himyarite descent, numbering about 15,000. They occupy Cape Mussendom and are a peculiar race with curious habits and customs, subsisting chiefly on fish and goats' milk. They are said to be Sunnis and are Hinawis by faction. An account of them by Dr. Jayaker is published in the *B.R.A.S.*

The Al-Shayadiyeen, a small tribe in the Batineh dwelling at Soor al-Shayadiyeen, who are Sunnis by faith and Hinawi by politics.

The Al-Saabiyeen are Wilad Mujab and number about 8,000, occupying Nafaa in Al-Dhahireh. Their faith is Ibadhi and they are Ghafiris, being at feud with the Hedadiba, Beni Araba, and Beni Battash.

The Al-Sowala number about 2,500 and occupy Al-Sowaik in the Batineh. They are Ibadhi in faith and belong to the Hinawi faction.

The Al-Suwafa number 300 and dwell at Salaif in Al-Dhahireh. Though of Maaddic descent they are not Hinawis and are at feud with the Ninadhera.

The Beni Subh is a small Ghafiri tribe numbering about 1,500 souls ; they are Sunni by religion.

The Beni Wahaib belongs to the Hinawi faction and numbers about 6,000 souls ; they are Ibadhi by religion and dwell in the vicinity of Muscat, Rowi, Wady Maih, Wady Bosher, and Al-Haboobiya.

The Al-Waheebeh is the largest pastoral tribe in Al-Sharkiya, numbering 30,000 and rearing the swiftest breed of camels perhaps in the world. They are divided into six fakhths and occupy Sidaira, Sinow, Wady Andam and Jazer ; there are said to be some of the Beni Solaib under their protection ; the Jahafa section of the Al-Waheebeh is also of foreign origin, being the Bedouins of the Al-Bu Saeedi, but it is a long time since they went over. There is also a small section of the Al-Waheebeh in the Batineh. The Al-Waheebeh is a restless predatory tribe with true Bedouin instincts. Though nominally Ibadhi, their religious proclivities are said to be more pagan than Islamitic and to retain many idolatrous superstitions and practices. The Shaikh's family is not of this tribe but of Tai, a branch of which, numbering 200, dwells at Beraimi, and Tai relations of the Shaikh continue to visit them. The Al-Waheebeh are Hinawi and are at feud with the Jenebeh.

The Al-Wahshab is a Hinawi tribe residing in Wady Hatta and Sunni by religion, numbering about 1,200, and are at feud with the Nizar.

The Al-Warood are of Maaddic descent, though now belonging to the Hinawi faction ; they are Ibadhi by religion and number 1,500, residing in the Wady Andam in the Sharkiya.

The Al-Yaakeeb, a Kahtanite tribe now included in the Hinawi faction, numbering 4,000 and residing at Obre in Al-Dhahireh ; they are Ibadhi by religion and at feud with the Beni Ghafir.

The Al-Yaareba claims to descend from Yaarab bin Kahtan, who is dated by some about 800 B.C. Yemenite by origin, it is included in the Ghafiri faction. The Nebhani Dynasty terminated in 968 A.H. [A.D. 1560] and after sixty-six more years the Yaareba Dynasty was founded by Nasir bin Murshid, in whose family the succession continued for twelve reigns ; their last refuge was Al-Hayam in the Batineh, which is, next to Nezwa, the strongest fort in Oman, which was taken by Azzan bin Kais in A.D. 1869, and the

Yaareba were then dispersed and ruined. The number of the tribe is 500, residing at Nakhl, Rostak, and Seija, who live in seclusion, poverty, and neglect. They have been much persecuted by the present dynasty, by whom they have been despoiled of all their property.

The Al-Yaman, an Azdite tribe occupying a large hujrah at Zikki in Oman Proper, numbering 5,000 ; they are Hinawi in politics and Ibadhi by religion.

The Al-Yamade, a small tribe, numbering 300, dwelling at Burka and Nakhl in the Batineh ; they are Ibadhi by religion and Hinawi in politics.

The Beni Yas, a large tribe recently settled in Oman, and numbering about 15,000, being both Bedouin and Hadhr and are mostly engaged in the pearl fishery. The tribe is strengthened by more than a dozen other tribes in cliency with it. Their two towns are Abu Thubi and Debaye on the Pirate Coast and extend inland as far as Beraimi ; they are of Nejdian origin. The Shaikh's family is of the Haboo Fala fakhth and the tribe takes its name, it is said, from Yas bin Amr. The tribe immigrated from Nejd about the middle of the eighteenth century, and were formerly much addicted to piracy. The town of Debaye is governed by the Boo Felass, a fakhth which separated from the Beni Yas about a century ago, and still remains independent of that tribe.

The Beni Zeed reside at Fida in Al-Dhahireh and number 500. Ibadhi and Sunni, they belong to the Ghafiri faction and are at feud with the Beni Ghafir.

The Al-Zekawina is a Hinawi tribe numbering 1,600, who are settled at Semed al-Shan in the Sharkiya ; they are Ibadhi by religion.

The Al-Zooab is also a Hinawi tribe, numbering 2,000 and occupying three villages in the Batineh, Rashad al-Zooab, Al-Rooda, and Kashda ; they are Sunni by religion.

CHAPTER IX.

ARABIA, EASTERN AND SOUTH EASTERN, AND THE KOORIA MOORIA ISLANDS.

THE Subkha Mutta, a broad salt marsh or belt, lying in latitude 24 degrees north, the most southern part of the Persian Gulf, forms, according to Arab information, the geographical boundary between Oman and Lhasa (or Nejd). The swampy tract, as its name implies, is over thirty miles wide and is said to be connected in its upper part with the Wady Yabreen, which flows from Yemama.

The land stretching from Ras Baraka and Ras Hasek, on the southern bank of the Subkha, to Abu Thubi, a distance of 150 miles, comprises the province of Al-Gharbiyeh and may be described as a desolate and inhospitable waste with a few ranges of low hills without a single hamlet, and frequented only by a few wandering Bedouins of the Minaseer and Beni Yas, Al-Morra, Beni Hajir, and Dowasir tribes. The soil is stony or sandy with a coarse vegetation, and the only animals are said to be the oryx, hare, and gazelle. Notwithstanding the arid nature of the land, the possession of part is disputed by the Chief of Abu Thubi, claiming to the north of the Subkha, as far as Khor Odaid, where there is a settlement of the Beni Yas. Chesney, however, says at present the Oman territory ends at the Pirate coast, instead of the borders of Al-Ahsa, which were formerly the boundary.

One of the routes or rather tracks leading from Al-Beraimi to Lhasa crosses the Subkha near the sea and thence turns northward. The journey from Al-Beraimi is said to be from twenty-five to thirty days, but as no part of the province has yet been traversed by a

European explorer we have to depend on what the Arabs choose to tell us.

From Baraka to Abu Thubi the coast is very little known, the survey not having yet been completed; along it there is a line of rocky reefs, shoals, and islets the whole way.

North of Ras Baraka is the Island of Dalma, three miles in length, on which iron ore and crystal have been found; Dalma has now become a rendezvous for pearl-fishers and merchants during the season and has a market, and further to the east is the Island of Seer Beni Yas, six miles long. Starting from Ras Baraka the coast trends east by north, and at a distance of forty-five miles we come to the entrance of Khor Bazim, a remarkable channel five miles wide and running along the shore for fifty miles; it was in this channel that many of the Joasmee pirate vessels sought refuge and concealment during the expedition of 1819.

After Khor al-Bazim the shore curves round to Ras Kantur, where there is another channel, the coast here being much indented by creeks. From Kantur to Abu Thubi the coast runs north-east for about twenty-five miles. The survey of this part of the coast took place in 1824 under Captain Brucks in the *Psyche*, and was conducted in detail in boats provisioned for six weeks; the Chief of Abu Thubi sent a guard, under his nephew, to assist them.

We now come to Abu Thubi, the first town on the Pirate coast belonging to the Beni Yas. The coast, though still generally spoken of in this way, is no longer the haunt of pirates, but is occupied by peaceful traders and fishermen, and does not now deserve the evil reputation it once merited; thanks to British influence the terror inspired and the depredations caused by the Arab sea-rovers are things of the past. The independence of this coast won from Muscat by the Wahabees is still maintained, and the land is now divided into six shaikhdoms, the preponderating power being in the hands of two powerful tribes—the Beni Yas and the Kowasim (or Joasmees). To the Arabs, the coast is known as Al-Sirr or Al-Sirr of Oman, and to the Persians as Julfara, the appellative, Julfar, so often mentioned in old travels, being applied to the town of Ras

al-Khyma, which the Arabs called Al-Sirr. The town of Abu Thubi contains about 10,000 inhabitants, and is secure from attack by hostile tribes by being built on an island formed by two creeks, Khor Abu Thubi and Khor Lafan, three miles apart and connected at the back by a long lagoon.

On his way to Beraimi the traveller Zwemer crossed this lagoon by a ferry at Muktaa, ten miles from Abu Thubi. The town extends along the beach for nearly two miles and has a strong fort, but only a few of the houses are built of stone ; the ground on which it stands is rock and sand. The palm grove here is very small and there is little or no cultivation owing to the scarcity of water, and the quantity to be obtained from wells is not only limited but so brackish as to be hardly potable, and the people are largely dependent on Debaye, which sends boatloads of water for sale. Abu Thubi possesses three large trading bughlas and bateels, and about 400 fishing boats, 250 of which are engaged in the pearl fishery ; several Banian or Hindoo traders reside here and hold in their hands the bulk of the trade of the port.

The Shaikh claims jurisdiction over a wide area, reaching from a point near Debaye even to Khor Odaid, where there is a settlement of the Beni Yas. Within that area dwell other tribes, viz., the Menasir, who number about 5,000, the Beni Kattab, the Beni Hajir, the Al-Morra, the Dowasir, and other tribes.

From Abu Thubi the coast runs in a straight line to Debaye, being for eighty miles a stretch of sterile, flat, and monotonous country, much intersected by creeks and swamps, and having no vegetation but mangroves and coarse grass ; though visited occasionally by Bedouins it has no permanent occupants. At a distance of twelve miles from Abu Thubi is said to be the best creek on the Pirate coast, called Khor Girab, but it is shallow at the entrance. Off this part of the coast is a long reef parallel to the shore on which the Company's sloop *Elphinstone* struck in 1837. Twenty miles further are more large creeks known as Khor Gharabi and Khor Ghanatha, which join inland, as do many of the smaller creeks. About sixty miles from Abu Thubi is a hillock

220 feet high, which, from its conspicuous position in so flat a country, has been named Jebel Ali or High Hill. At about eighty-two miles from Abu Thubi we arrive at Debaye, now, perhaps, the most important town on the Pirate coast. Though also belonging to the Beni Yas it is independent of Abu Thubi, and has many stone houses and does a thriving trade with Lingah and other ports in the Gulf, besides possessing a good share in the pearl fishery to which it sends 500 boats; the population may be 12,000 to 14,000 and the Shaikh belongs to the Abu Falasa section of the Beni Yas tribe. The lagoon extends a long way to the south-east and has a shallow rocky bar at the entrance; the trade being practically in the hands of the Banians, whose strong business capacity gives them a leading position.

Between Debaye and Shargah, which is nine miles distant, are two villages, Abu Hail and Khan. At Shargah we pass into the territory of the Kowasim or Joasmee tribe, who are fanatical Wahabees; it was formerly independent of Ras al-Khyma but is now subordinate to the Head Shaikh there. The population of Shargah is about 10,000, composed of mixed tribes, namely, the Al-Bu Ali and Shihiyyeen. Many boats and trading vessels are built here, large and small, the timber, chiefly teak, being imported from the Malabar coast. It sends 350 boats to the pearl fishery and has about a hundred ordinary fishing boats in addition. The water at Shargah is bad and brackish, as it is in most places on the coast. The date groves are extensive, producing nearly sufficient fruit for consumption, which is rarely the case in these towns, and the creek is between the town and the sea, and runs about three miles, having its entrance a mile to the northward of the town.

The surveying vessel *Discovery* was nearly wrecked off Shargah in February, 1822, and lost all her anchors. Off this town the great pearl banks of the Persian Gulf are said to commence and a short note on this famous fishery will be found in another place; the banks extend along the greater portion of the Arab shore as far as Kwait, a distance of 330 miles, and appear to be as extensive, important, and productive as ever.

Passing two villages, Fasht and Hyra, with date groves, we come to Al-Ajman, which belongs to the Naeen tribe and has a creek big enough for large bughlas to enter; it has a population of 1,500 and possesses 100 pearl boats and thirty ordinary fishing boats. Six miles from Al-Ajman lies Al-Hamriya, or the Red town, which also belongs to the Naeen. It has a port with five towers and a population of 600.

Distant seven miles to the north-east of Al-Hamriya is Om al-Gewain, built on a peninsula formed by a broad lagoon, which branches out inland; but old Om al-Gewain has been deserted and the present town stands on the site of the village "Libina." The town has several towers and there is a wall built across the Isthmus; notwithstanding its advantages Om al-Gewain is in a declining state. The population is about 1,000 belonging to the Yal Ali tribe, and the number of boats sent to the pearl fishery may be eighty.

Further on we come to Jezirat al-Hamra, or the "Red Island," which is really a peninsula formed by a creek. The village has a small castle and is situated about fifteen miles from Om al-Gewain, the people being of the Kaab tribe, and are subordinate to Ras al-Khyma; they send a few boats to the pearl fishery.

The last independent town on the Pirate coast at which we now arrive is Ras al-Khyma, better known a century or so ago as Julfar, a name given to it by the Persians, who long held possession of it, but by the Arabs it was always called "Al-Sirr." Some time after the expulsion of the Persians in 1744 it appears to have received its present appellation of Ras al-Khyma, or "Tent Head," but the origin of it is obscure.

The Pirate coast presents a remarkable peculiarity in possessing from one end to the other a series of creeks, lagoons, and backwaters, often uniting with each other a little distance from the sea, or ramifying in various directions inland. These backwaters, though always shallow at the entrance, are deep higher up and serve as excellent harbours of refuge for vessels of all sizes, but without these back waters the coast would have been barely habitable, whereas with these advantages it is not surprising that the inhabitants, with the

predatory instincts of the Arab race, should have betaken themselves to piracy at a very early period. There is reason to believe that Ras al-Khyma had ever been the chief stronghold of piracy in the Persian Gulf, and in the eighteenth century the forbears of the Joasmees, the Hawala tribe, had given much trouble to Nadir Shah, but with the appearance of the Wahabees on the coast from Nejd the passion and greed of plunder was greatly stimulated by these adventurous and fanatical warriors, who allowed nothing to stand in the way of their despoiling the heretics. The interference with English trade, early in the nineteenth century, became so serious that in 1806 an expedition was sent from Bombay against them, but it was totally inadequate for the purpose and failed to have any effect. A second expedition was despatched in 1809, when Ras al-Khyma was destroyed, but the effect was marred by the hasty withdrawal of the troops on the approach of the Wahabee reinforcements. Nothing daunted, the pirates were soon at work again, and matters grew worse until 1816 when, in consequence of the capture of four Indian puttimars in the Red Sea, and the murder of their crews, a naval force was sent to obtain redress. The Shaikh Hassan bin Rahmah, however, was defiant and refused to surrender the culprit, Ameer bin Ibrahim, or to pay the indemnity of £20,000. Ras al-Khyma was then bombarded by H.M.S. *Challenger* and others, but the shot fell short and the force retired unsuccessful. The fourth and final assault upon Ras al-Khyma took place in 1819, for by this time the patience of the Indian Government had been exhausted, and a powerful armament was despatched which reached its destination in December. The fort and batteries were mounted with eighty guns of sizes, and Hassan bin Rahmah had collected 7,000 men to defend the town. The troops in landing carried the works very quickly and demolished it; all the vessels that could be found being taken or burnt; while the Commander-in-Chief, Sir W. Grant Keir, decided very judiciously to occupy the place until piracy had been completely extirpated, and, with a force of Sepoys, remained there for six months, when the insalubrity of the spot compelled its evacuation. By this expedi-

tion Ras al-Khyma received its death-blow as a piratical centre, and by the treaties then and subsequently made along the coast, depredations at sea have become a thing of the past. Ras al-Khyma has 5,000 inhabitants and belongs to the Joasmees, of which tribe it is the headquarters, and containing many of the Shihiyyeen, Kaab, Motara, and other tribes. The castle is at the end of the town and there is also a large tower. Behind it is a spacious lagoon, the entrance to which is about a mile to the north-east of the houses; it contains many boats but no large vessels, as it is only about ten feet deep at high water. Of the 170 boats belonging to this port, 110 are ordinary fishing boats, the remainder being pearl-fishers and traders.

Like all others on the coast the lagoon here swarms with fish and the people are thus provided the year round with an abundant food supply close to their door. Of all the places on the Pirate coast, which is 150 miles in length, Ras al-Khyma is perhaps the most eligible, chiefly on account of its possessing a good supply of fresh water, while in all other towns the water is very brackish and repugnant to the taste.

The next village, north of Ras al-Khyma, is Rams, with a small port and date grove belonging to the Joasmees, while two miles inland is Zai, another small village.

At twelve miles from Rams we come to Shuam, where the Pirate coast terminates. Shuam is situated in a low gorge more than a mile from the sea, the huts of which may be seen clustering up the sides of the hills like beehives, and it lies to the south of a well-watered cultivated ravine full of palms. The wells, sixteen in number, are both square and round, and appear to have at one time formed part of an ancient felej leading to a very remarkable conical hill on the beach, sixty feet high, called "Al-Sanain," or the "idol," suggesting the idea that it was probably an object of worship in the "Days of Ignorance." Close by is the tomb of a Moslem Saint, Shaikh Zohair, which is built of stone and Madripore coral and has the appearance of Persian work. At Shuam, as at many other places on the promontory, the fishermen catch great quantities of small fry

called metoot, which are packed for export in long conical bags eight feet long, made of plaited date leaves. This town marks the furthest point of Muscat territory and the limit of the Joasmee Shaikh of Ras al-Khyma. The population of the district are subordinate to the Governor of Shuam, being about 2,000, mostly of the Tannejee, a section of the Shihiyyeen tribe.

Between Ras Shuam, the height of which is 3,500 feet, and Ras Shaikh Mesood there are several fishing hamlets and headlands, known as Ras Jadi, which stands near " Fine Peak," which rises to 4,470 feet. On the eastern side of the promontory called Ras Shaikh Mesood is Khasab Bay, which is two miles deep and four wide ; the town of Khasab lying at the bottom of a small cove at the foot of a valley. The little harbour is well sheltered and has been described as an excellent strategical point for controlling the entrance of the Persian Gulf, while the fort was constructed in the seventeenth century by the Portuguese, who called it " Cosapo," and was used as a base of operations by Admiral Ruy Frere da Andrada during his protracted campaign for the recovery of Hormuz ; it stands not very far from the beach and presents four square bastions joined by curtains and surrounded by a ditch. The inhabitants of the town number about 1,000, composed chiefly of two tribes, the Kaneaira (who occupy the upper part of the valley) and the Hataira, a section of the Shihiyyeen ; many of the people are of Persian descent and are cloth-weavers. The Governor is appointed from Muscat, but the revenue does not suffice for his expenses ; in his district there are several villages, while the population under his jurisdiction may number 6,000. The people of the town are perpetually at variance with each other, making the Governor's time wholly occupied in settling their squabbles. There are four streams flowing from springs in the hills, two of which are perennial, and good water is consequently plentiful. Khasab is the place from which the whole promontory, according to Ptolemy, who calls it " Asabo Mons," derived its name.

Eastward of Khasab is Kadiba Cove, on the western side of the entrance to which is a village called Mokteri, picturesquely

built on ledges of rock. The huge promontory known as Cape Mussendom to Europeans, and to the Arabs as Roos al-Jebel, literally "Heads of Mountains" or "Clusters of Peaks," consists of lofty and barren rocks of very singular contour, precipitous down to the sea, and greatly indented with coves, bays, and inlets, some of which form large landlocked harbours. The people are of the Shihiyyeen tribe, numbering perhaps 16,000 to 18,000, scattered over the hills as shepherds or employed in the creeks as fishermen. The Sultan's dominions, which began at Shuam, include Khasab, Koomzar, and Dibba, while Khor Fakan and other villages belong to the Joasmee Shaikh.

At a distance of three miles from Khasab and twelve miles from Mussendom is the entrance to Khor al-Shuam, named by the Survey officers, "Elphinstone Inlet," after the Governor of Bombay, Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone. This remarkable creek or harbour is eight miles in length with steep rocky sides all round and partakes of the curved indented character of the whole promontory, being narrow and winding with many coves and inlets; it is, in fact, a submerged ravine. Inside the creek on the north side is a village called Shem, and a little way off is an islet of the same name. On another islet stood, from 1864 to 1869, a telegraph station, where the Persian Gulf cable was landed under a convention with the Sultan of Muscat, Seyyid Thowaini; the entrance to this inlet is only half a mile wide and is impossible to detect from seaward, being overhung by dark, precipitous cliffs. In the old days the inlet was made use of by the pirates to evade the Company's men-of-war, who, being unacquainted with its existence, saw with amazement the enemy suddenly disappearing from the scene, as if by magic; lowering her yard to avoid the contrast of her white sail against the dark rock, the dhow, towed by her boats, would slip into the narrow passage and disappear. Captain Brucks, who himself served against the pirates, remarks that this inlet was one of the many places into which they used to escape from cruisers, and Whitelock makes a similar observation. To the north of Khor al-Shem the configuration of the land is very curious, presenting a

triangular peninsula, the neck of which is very contracted, while on the south side a peak called Jebel Shem, with steep cliff, towers up 3,000 feet to stand guard like a sentinel over the inlet. North of this peninsula is Colville Cove, called by the Arabs Khor Groob Ali, a deep inlet lying off which is Jezirat Ghanam, or "Sheep Island," between which and the land is Discovery Strait, known to the natives as Khor Kawi. Ghanam Island is over two miles long, and stands two miles to the south of Perforated Rock; the Koomzaries use this island for pasturing their flocks. Five miles from Jezirat Ghanam is Ras Sheerat, a curious tongue of land a mile and a quarter long and very narrow. Koomzar is the most northern town in Oman and is unique as being the only purely Persian town on the Arab coast. It is situated in a narrow cleft in the mountain which rises high and precipitous on each side, giving it a remarkable appearance; it has no date grove and the only verdure to be seen consists of some lithic trees growing out of the rock, and has only one well eighty feet deep. The houses are packed very close and are built of stone and mud and flat roofed. The streets are very nerrow, and graves are to be seen in the midst of the houses, there being no other place for them.

From Ras Mukkhalif, the Western Point, to the town is a mile deep and three-quarters of a mile wide, having a population of about 1,000; the men are all fishermen and own about a hundred boats, most of which are built here. The people being of undoubted Persian origin are very fair, and speak a corrupt Persian with a slight admixture of Arabic. There are a few cattle, sheep and goats, which are fed principally on fish, in the absence of vegetables; fish curing is done with brine and packed in earthenware jars for home consumption. Koomzar is exposed at times to strong gusts of wind, but it is said to be suffocatingly hot in the summer.

To the north-east of this cove the coast is as intricate as it is grand, wild, majestic, and picturesque. The extreme northern point of the great promontory at which we now arrive, and which is four miles from Koomzar, is named Ras al-Bab, and lies opposite to the Island of Mussendom. Ras al-Bab is a high peak, sombre

and bare, standing at the entrance of the passage, less than half a mile wide between Ras al-Bab and the island. This entrance is called by the Arabs, Fakk al-Assad, or the "Lion's Mouth," in reference to the dangerous race or current that runs through it; or probably to the fancied resemblance of the rocks to the jaws of a lion.

The Island of Mussendom, which has given its name to the whole promontory among Europeans, is two miles long and a mile and a-half wide at the southern end, where it is broadest, and is at the highest part nearly 900 feet in elevation. Constable tells us that the remains of a fort are visible on the island consisting of blocks of stone squared with too much care to be of modern origin; they might, he thinks, be the ruins of a building which anciently served as a watch-tower. The island tapering towards the north end terminates in a cliff 100 feet high called Ras Mussendom, and the weathering of this cape has always been regarded with dread by Arab navigators passing in and out of the Gulf on account of the gales of wind and the strong currents that prevail here. In order to propitiate the spirits of the deep they have long been accustomed to send afloat a model ship, more or less elaborate, or even a coconut shell, filled with fragments of food and sweetmeats and to watch its career with keen anxiety, for if the toy boat reaches the shore in safety they augur a prosperous voyage, but should it be capsized, dire forebodings fill their minds; these models were often met with by ships far out at sea in calm weather. One can imagine how many of these frail craft Sinbad the Sailor must have launched and seen shattered by the waves when passing through the throat of the Persian Gulf in his luckless voyages from Busra to the Indian Ocean. It was at this point that the Nautical Survey, inaugurated by Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor, for the purpose of writing down the coast and laying bare the pirates' hiding-places and haunts, commenced operations in 1820. Previous to this important work the coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf were very little known and the navigation had always been found by European seamen to be difficult and hazardous. The first chart

of the Inland Sea was due to the labours of the famous traveller, Carston Niebuhr, who published his *Description de l'Arabie* in 1764. This was succeeded by the results of the expedition fitted out in Bombay in 1774, under Captain Robinson in the *Fox* and Captain Porter in the *Dolphin*, with Lieutenants Marvell and Blair. The officers cursorily surveyed the Gulf and the Oman Coast from Muscat to Mussendom and gained much additional knowledge, which was subsequently augmented by the Company's Hydrographer, Mr. Dalrymple, who drew his information from Captain Maclure and other navigators. Milburn's work first appeared in 1813, and Horsburg's " Charts " and " Directory " still remained practically unknown when the more scientific survey began its work.

The entrance of the Persian Gulf at the narrowest part, from Mussendom to Larek, is thirty-two statute miles across, and is known to the Persians generally as Bab-i-Sekunder, in reference to the voyage of Nearchus, who commanded the fleet of Alexander the Great.

Nine miles to the northward of Mussendom are the Quoins, three wedge-shaped islands, the highest of which is 540 feet, called by the Arabs " Salama-wa-Bent," or " Salama and her daughters." These islands were made use of as a favourite lurking-place by the Joasmee pirates, who, concealed under their shade, watched their opportunity to pounce upon luckless traders as they passed in or out of the Gulf.

To the south-east, distant three miles, is the Cape, known to the classic writers as " Incobrice," a transposition of the appellation Ras Kabr Hindi or the " Indians' Grave." The origin of the name is lost in oblivion. It is the most eastern point of the whole promontory, and is 1,200 feet high.

Just below Ras Kabr Hindi is a cove called Doohat Shisaa, which is only separated from Elphinstone Inlet by a narrow ridge of rock ; this cove is seven miles deep and has in it one small village, from which it takes its name. Dividing Doohat Shisaa from the next creek, Ghubbet Shaboos, is a lofty rocky peninsula over four miles long, with a peak called Jebel Sibr, which rises to 3,000 feet.

To complete the deep indentation of this extraordinary promontory we now reach the last and perhaps the largest of all, namely, Malcolm's Inlet, known to the Arabs as Khor Ghazira or Ghubbet Ghazira, which penetrates nine miles into the interior and is only walled off from Elphinstone's Inlet by a rocky ridge about a mile thick; this magnificent creek is much indented and has several islets and villages, coves and bays. The southern point of the entrance, which is three miles wide, is formed by Ras Sarkim, a perpendicular cliff several hundred feet high; this inlet was named after General Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay in 1826.

Doohat Kabal, the next cove, runs in for three miles south-west, where the mountains rise precipitately 4,000 feet. In this valley are the remains of an old town, the houses of which were built of large square stones, some of them being eight or nine feet long. Ten miles from Malcolm's Inlet are the bay, village and island of Lima, the latter lying just off Ras Lima, which is 280 feet high. Behind Lima and twelve miles distant the mountains rise to the highest peak of the promontory in Jebel Hareen, 6,750 feet, the peak being fifteen miles from the next highest summit, namely, Jebel Kewi, 5,800 feet, which is opposite to Doohat Haffa. The general trend of the coast here is south, and we now come to the famous town and bay of Dibba. This well-sheltered bay, six miles across, was formerly a great emporium of trade and may have been the mart alluded to by Nearchus, but it owes its chief celebrity to its being the site of the battle which gave Oman to Islam in 12 A.H. [A.D. 633], in the time of Abu Bekr, when the Omani Chief Lakeet was defeated by Ikrima and Hadhaifa, as narrated elsewhere. It is supposed to have been founded by the Dibba and Lizard tribes, which migrated from Al-Yemama and were crushed and exterminated in the war; the population is now about 3,000, occupying thirteen hamlets in the bay. The impression on the mind produced by a contemplation of this stupendous cape is that the chain was once united with the corresponding mountain system in Persia, and that by a sudden subsidence of the earth at this part at some remote geological epoch the sea rushed in to form the gulf and fill the valleys, ravines, and

inlets as we now see them. As regards the geological formation of the mountain mass the only description we have is that of Dr. Carter, whose account is here transcribed verbatim :—

> " At sight these mountains appear like basalt, from their black colour, and hence have been described as such by Captain Wellsted and Whitelock, and have always been considered igneous rocks. Pliny calls them the Eblætian Mountains, probably from the Arabic ' Iblis,' the Devil, but latterly this promontory and its islands have been inspected by Lieutenant Constable, of the Indian Navy, who has kindly shown me specimens from them, which prove that they are all composed not of black basalt, as before suspected, but of jet black and dark greyblack limestone, interstratified and veined with white and pinkish-brown calc spar. The jet black limestone is of a fine compact structure, and breaks with a smooth concoidal fracture, like lithographic limestone, but the lighter coloured varieties are more coarse, and break with a rough fracture. The calc spar, which is in a strata of eight to ten feet thick, is columnar, or vertical, in its crystallization and traversed horizontally by wavy lines, like that of Gibraltar; some of it is of a dazzling whiteness, and of a massive saccharoid, crystalline structure. I was informed by Lieutenant Constable that the whole of these mountains here are of a similar composition, and they are horizontally stratified, the strata in some places being thinner and more slaty than in others."

The next place of interest we come to is Khor Fakan, which was formerly of much more importance than it is at present, but it has never recovered from its destruction by Albuquerque in 1507, when it was deserted by the Hindoo traders who resided there. The town is an assembly of mat huts encircled by a wall, with a population of 600, standing in a small bay at the mouth of a stony ravine in the hills ; it has a good date grove and there is an islet called Sereet off the north-east point. Up the ravine are the ruins of a fort or blockhouse, built by the Persian General, Mohammed

Taki Khan, in 1742. In 1864, Colonel Disbrowe and Captain Powell crossed the Cape from Khor Fakan, in connection with the laying of the cable of the Persian Gulf line of the telegraph. The rocks here are said to be volcanic, and the diorite to be of the same description as at Muscat. Khor Fakan, at present, belongs to the Joasmees, who possess the coast from Tibba to Mareer, the Sultan having no jurisdiction here. Passing Khor Kelba, a small creek 23 miles from Khor Fakan, we reach Ras Mallaha six miles further on, which marks not only the south-eastern end of the promontory, but also the boundary of the province of Al-Shemal ; at Ras Mallaha just above Mareer the hills begin to recede from the coast and the province of Al-Batineh commences.

This long level expanse sweeps round in a gentle curve from Mareer in a generally south-westerly direction, gradually widening as far as Seeb and Nakhl, where it terminates. The Batineh is the most populous of all the provinces, containing perhaps three-quarters of a million souls, representing a great variety of tribes. The Yal Saad, who occupy about 25 miles of coast and number about 60,000, are the largest in all Oman, and possess several towns, namely, Muludda, Thirmud, Khodhra, Tareef, etc., are wealthy in dates, boats, and agriculture, but are not a warlike race ; in 1874 the tribe gave trouble by murdering a Banian and plundering the property of British subjects, for which they were duly punished. The people generally are thriving and well-to-do, more so than in any other province, and being naturally unwarlike and much engaged in industrial pursuits, they are very subject to devastating raids by the predatory tribes of Al-Dhahireh, to which they offer slight resistance. The Hinawi faction, in particular, is much stronger in this province than the Ghafiri, but a small section is composed of Persians, Belooch, and slaves, who have no political influence.

At the chief trading centres in the Batineh may be found a small number of Hindoo merchants from Cutch, who have established themselves on the coast for many centuries. These Banians, being under British protection, enjoy immunity from taxation and ill-treatment by local chiefs, while their superiority and knowledge

give them a controlling influence in commercial transactions, and these shrewd and enterprising merchants not only acquire considerable fortunes for themselves, but by their operations as bankers, brokers, and moneylenders, render indispensable service to Arabs of all classes.

After leaving Mareer we come to Abu Bukara and Khadrawein in the Wady Koor, six miles up which is Al-Aswad or the Black Village, belonging to the Shahat. Between this and Shinas is Al-Akr, mentioned by the traveller Ibn al-Mojawir.

Shinas, the first town we come to in the Batineh, fifteen miles from Ras Mallaha, lies in the Wady Hatta which forms the natural highway from it through the hills to Abu Thubi ; the Wady belongs to the Wahashat and Bedonat tribes and has several villages along its course. The population of Shinas is about 1,000, composed of the Dahamina, Shahat and Ghanoor tribes, with Persian and Belooch. In front of the town is a lagoon three and a-half miles in length, deep enough for large fishing boats, and running parallel to the sea beach ; the district is fairly well cultivated and a good deal of tobacco is grown here. The fort is an imposing one, quadrangular in shape and with three strong bastions, and the walls, which are twenty feet high, are riddled with holes, the result of the bombardment of 1809. In that year Sir Lionel Smith, the leader of the expedition, sent to destroy the pirate stronghold, landed part of his troops to compel the evacuation of the Wahabees and Joasmees, who then held the fort, and to return it to the Sultan. After a most gallant resistance, the Wahabees surrendered and the fort occupied, but almost immediately afterwards the troops were re-embarked by Colonel Smith, who gave over the fort to the Sultan ; the following day the Wahabees, having been reinforced from Al-Beraimi, fell upon the Omani Arabs, who though superior in numbers were routed and cut to pieces. The people here are all fishermen or cultivators and no industries carried on, but trade flourishes, there being no less than seven Banians and three Khojas in the town. In the old slave-trading days cargoes of raw African negroes were often landed at Shinas and marched overland to Shargah to avoid capture by the cruisers of the Indian Navy, who were then lying off the Pirate coast in wait for them.

From Shinas the coast runs to Sohar, a distance of thirty-three miles, the interval being occupied by a series of nine large villages and a dozen hamlets. The former are Hasefam, Asrar, a place visited by Ibn al-Mojawir, Nabha, Lawa, near which is a small town called Fez, possessed by the Riyasa tribe, Ghadfain, Magees, which belongs to the Hamadireen, Waheebeh and Nowafil tribes, Umk, Al-Fasika, and Sailan. The Arabs inhabiting the villages and hamlets are of various small tribes, but a large proportion of the population consists of Persian and Belooch settlers. Near Sohar we come to Wady Mawa, in which is a village of the same name.

Sohar, the principal town on the Batineh coast, lies 150 miles from Muscat, and was in ancient times, under the pristine name of Oman, the capital of the whole country. In the early days of Islam Sohar was visited by Chinese junks, and Istakari, writing in the tenth century of our era, says : " The capital is Sohar, which is on the sea ; here reside many sea-merchants, who trade in ships with other countries. It is the most populous and wealthy town in Oman and it is not possible to find on the shore of the Persian Sea in all the land of Islam a city more rich in fine buildings and foreign wares than Sohar." It has formed the appanage of several of the descendants of the Imam Ahmed bin Saeed, the latest being Seyyid Turkee, who ruled the district in the time of Palgrave's visit in 1861. The town is encircled by a wall without bastions, which is about a mile in circumference, constructed by the Portuguese, who occupied it for nearly a century. The stubborn defence of this town by the Wali Ahmed bin Saeed, in 1743, against the army sent by Nadir Shah to conquer the country, caused the failure of that scheme and the eventual withdrawal of the Persian troops. There is a fine citadel, in which is the Wali's residence, a lofty square built edifice, with a strong entrance and a number of guns. The exports are dates and salt fish, but the town has decayed much of late years. The population, which is very mixed, is now only about 5,000, The trade is decreasing annually, being drawn off to rival ports, and Sohar has now sunk almost to a level with the ports in the Batineh ; it is an open roadstead and is for half the year dead lee

shore, often a heavy surf breaking on the beach. A few miles from the town is Aufy, a well-timbered and fertile spot, once a favourite residence of the Yaareba Imams.

Four miles from Sohar, on the coast, is Sowara, in a line with which, fifteen miles towards the hills, is Hoora Barga, a solitary conical peak, 1,550 feet high, called Sohar Peak, which forms a good landmark. Near this, and not far from the Wady Makabeel, are the ruins of an ancient town known as Olab, where excavations are made by the people to obtain bricks for building houses. The next town on the coast is Saham, seventeen miles from Sohar, and in the intervening space there are six villages, including Sowara, two of which are Al-Khishda and Soor Al-Sheyadee. Saham is surrounded by a dense date grove and much cultivation, having a population of 2,000 composed of the tribes of Beni Ali, Majid, and Beni Shamoos. There are seven Banians, who carry on a considerable trade with Al-Dhahireh by the Wady Ahin or Batha Saham. In this valley the principal town is Heebi, which was formerly subordinate to Yenkal, but was separated therefrom by Seyyid Azzan in A.D. 1870, and has since been under Sohar, while the industries in Saham are fishing, fish-curing, and cloth-weaving, with extensive potteries. To the eastward of the bazaar are the ruins of the fort which was dismantled by Seyyid Thowaini in 1861.

Pursuing our course to Khaboora, a distance of eighteen miles, we find in the intervening space four large villages and seven hamlets. The first place after Saham is Al-Ruwaisila, belonging to the Hamadireen and Zaab tribes; next is Khor al-Hamar or "Hot Spring Creek"; then the village of Mukhaileef, belonging to the Karara and the Hamadireen; while Um al-Jareet belongs to the Fezara and Deel to the Wilad Abd al-Salam. Khaboora lies in the debouchment of the Wady Howasina, is unwalled, but has a fort, while the bazaar is large and well supplied, the trade being in the hands of twenty-five Khoja traders, who are very prosperous. The population is about 6,000, being chiefly employed in rope and cable making, cloth-weaving and boat-building. Possessing in the Wady Howasina the most open and direct road to Shahireh,

To face p. 457.

WIND TOWER ON FORT AT BAHILA CALLED BURJ AL-REH. [*See p.* 381]

Khaboora has been able to concentrate the greater part of the commercial intercourse between the two provinces. The chief town in the valley, and the residence of the Shaikh, is Ghazreem, but the upper part of the Wady belongs to the Beni Omar, while the Howasina Shaikh's authority extends along the coast from Kasbya to Al-Fajeera.

Along the coast from Khaboora to Sowaik, which is the next fortified town and lies twenty miles distant from it, are twelve villages and hamlets occupied by numerous small tribes. The first village is Abasa, belonging to the Kateef tribe, the next being Al-Fajeera and Al-Khoweyrat, also of the Kateef; then come Al-Galeet and Al-Hojeera, and further on Al-Khadhra, the largest of all, of the Yal Saad and Al-Bu Rashid. Close to Sowaik is Khor Wilad Ghowaif. Sowaik is, after Sohar and Burka, the chief castle on the Batineh coast. Situated near the beach in front of the town it stands high and imposing, with three bastions and well furnished with guns. It has a good walled bazaar and there are eleven Banians here who control the trade; cotton cloth, especially the variety known as khodrung, is largely manufactured here. The population is about 4,000, composed of the Sowala, Fadhool and other smaller tribes. The cultivation round Sowaik is luxuriant, consisting of dates, bananas, limes, mangoes, oranges, papaya, and other fruits; corn, sugar, cotton, and indigo. The ravines in the hill range contribute several streams to irrigate this part of the coast and two large wadis, the Wady Beni Ghafir and the Wady al-Kabir, are found in the vicinity of Sowaik. Sowaik had formerly been the appanage of Seyyid Hilal bin Mohammed who was slain by Azzan. In 1874 Sowaik was besieged by Ibrahim bin Kais, who had marched down from Rostak, but he was soon compelled to raise the siege and retire. It may be of interest to observe here that Sowaik is connected with the curious story of *Sinbad the Sailor*.

At thirteen miles from the town we arrive at Mesnaah, the intervening space being filled up with nine villages, Soor, Rabeea, Widam, Shirs, and six others. Inland from Shirs, about five miles, are the two towns Muludda and Tharmud, which are opposite to each other and divided bv the Wady Beni Ghafir, the inhabitants

of which taken together are said to number about 7,000, and form perhaps the largest settlement in the Batineh, having extensive cultivation and date groves. Al-Mesnaah is the natural port of Al-Rostak and was at one time a very prosperous town, but has now greatly declined owing to political dissensions and consequent insecurity. It had a strong handsome fort, but this was razed to the ground by Seyyid Turkee in 1874, after the abortive attempt of Ibrahim bin Kais; it is now subordinate to the Sultan's Wali at Burka and only seven Banians remained in the bazaar in 1880. At the village of Bu Abali, four miles east of Al-Mesnaah, is the outlet of the Wady Beni Kharoos which has its source near Awabi in Jebel Akhdar and is joined on the way by the Wady Misthal; Bu Abali belongs to the Zahaba tribe; the neighbouring village of Sarm al-Shibeybee is owned by the Hikman.

A few miles further on we come to Ras Sowadi, or "Black Point," a low sandy spot, which has a large islet, 280 feet high, and six smaller islets. Beyond Sowadi are three villages, two of which are deserted, and the third, Al-Hifre, occupied by the Fadhool tribe. Near Burka are two creeks, one of which, Khor Haloo, or Fresh-water Creek, is the outlet of the Wady Abyad, the other, Khor Meraisi, is the outlet of the Wady Mawa. Burka, the last castle on the Batineh coast, stands next in importance to Sohar and dominates the eastern as Sohar does the western part of the province. The date groves and cultivation are extensive, industries are considerable, and trade flourishes; four Banians and several Khoja traders reside here, but the water is so brackish that it has to be brought from Al-Haradi, the outlet of the Wady Hammam, about a mile off. The castle is ancient and well constructed, having been greatly improved by the Yaareba Sultans; it has sixteen pieces of ordnance, 12 and 24-pounders, mounted and unmounted, lying about. The population is about 15,000, consisting of the Mowalik and other tribes, with a large admixture of Belooch, and a large number are employed in the fishing industry, which is very productive, the supply much exceeding the demand. A few miles inland from Burka is Naaman, an old country house of the Imam, where, in 1807, Seyyid

Bedr, who had usurped the government from the young sons of Seyyid Sultan, was murdered. Opposite the coast, and nine miles distant between Burka and Seeb, lie a group of islands, seven in number, called the Deymanieh ; they are all sterile, waterless and uninhabited, and two only have separate names—Joon and Khararaba. (The Deymanieh group is often called by fishermen the " Saba Jezair " or the Seven Islands, and derives this appellation " Deymanieh " from a tribe of that name, of which a small remnant still exists in Oman ; the name has remained unaltered since the time of Pliny.) Leaving Burka we come to Al-Haraki, a fortlet of the Shaikh Saeed tribe ; at this place is the outlet of the Wady Hammam from which Burka gets its water. Next is Hei Asim, belonging to the Saabiyeen with a fortlet mentioned by Ibn al-Mojawir. Near this are the ruins of Rumais, now belonging to the Al-Marhafera and to the Yal Hamad ; according to the Kamoos, Rumais was four times as large as Burka. Then follows Al-Shaklokheet, belonging to the Mowalik. After this we come to Anbaila, a date grove and hamlet of the Al-Waheebeh. Next is Soor Wilad Hadeed, a walled village with one tower belonging to the tribe of that name. Passing the Wady al-Ara there is a castor-oil nullah, a shady and verdant spot much resorted to in hot weather, while between this and Seeb is Hillet bin Heia, a village with a tower inhabited by the Al-bin Heia.

Seventeen miles from Burka and twenty-seven from Muscat lies Seeb, a large and straggling unwalled town of 1,500 souls. A good deal of fruit and grain is cultivated in the vicinity and there are six Hindoo traders in the bazaar, who do a thriving trade with Nakhl and Semail. The Shaikh is appointed from Muscat with the title of Wali, but is subordinate to Busra. In 1875 a tower was built and a small garrison stationed here to protect the bazaar, which was previously exposed to Bedouin raiders. Two miles from Seeb stands the ruined country house of Seyyid Thowaini, visited by Palgrave after his shipwreck in 1861, but it was destroyed by the Imam Azzan bin Kais in 1869, his puritanical mind not suffering the edifice, in which his cousin's revels had been conducted, to cumber

the earth. The ruins, surrounded by a mud wall, stand in a solitary waste and known as Wady Arash, though Palgrave puts it as Bunta Fanja.

With Seeb the province of the Batineh may be said to terminate, and the coast eastward for some distance belongs to Oman Proper. After leaving Seeb there is nothing to be noticed until we reach the broad sandy bed of the Wady Semail, which is scarcely distinguishable. The bed is shallow and bare and has generally but a small driblet of water in it, owing to absorption in the porous soil and to the drawing-off of large quantities of water for irrigation purposes. In times of flood, however, as was the case, for instance, in the terrible hurricane of 1885, which caused such havoc in its course, the bed is scoured to the sea. The Wady Semail extends about a hundred miles, has many castles, and is occupied by various tribes, and forms the main artery of communication from the coast to the interior and is the longest perennial stream in Oman. The first village in this wady is called Khoth, and is distant a mile and a-half from the sea. Passing a hamlet called Hallet Wilad Yusef we come to Butha Fanja, or Wady al-Bahayis, from the water holes of which water is taken to Seeb for domestic use; this mouth with that above mentioned forms the delta of the Semail Valley. After two hamlets of the Al-Hawasal and Al-Mobasila tribes we come to Khor al-Farad, or Wady al-Lowami, and then Khareyyiz, a hamlet of the Haboos. The next village we come to, Hail, belongs to the Awamir and gives its name to Ghubbet Hail, where the coast curves round to the northward. Khor Bukkera and the village of Misbakh are then passed and we reach Khaleel, a hamlet of the Showawi ; Khor Adheeba is the next creek, which, like the last, originates in the Tyeen range. The last village in Ghubbet Hail is Ghobra, which is distant from Jebel Tyeen (5,250 feet high) about twenty miles.

Four miles from Ghobra are the villages Ghulla and Bosher, where there are hot springs much famed for their curative properties and greatly resorted to from all parts ; the springs are numerous and there are several places for bathing ; a slight deposit of sulphate of

magnesia is generally round the springs while the temperature varies from 103° to 114° Fahr. Some of the pools swarm with fish, which are generally known as sudd, though each species has its own distinctive name. Nine miles northward from Ghobra is the projecting headland Ras al-Ahmir, where the coast turns sharply to the east, while between Ghobra and Ras al-Ahmir is Khor al-Kurm, near to which is Wataia, an old palace of Seyyid Thowaini, now fast crumbling to ruins. At this creek the sandy beach terminates, but by some authorities the Batineh is considered to extend as far as this point. Opposite to Ras al-Ahmar, two miles out to sea, is the Island of Fahil or the "Stallion," a steep rock 280 feet high and precipitous all round, a breeding-place for falcons, ospreys, and gulls. Passing Ras Malih and Meseeh al-Leehai we come to Darseyt, a village in the fertile little Wady Darseyt, which is a continuation of the Sih al-Harmel. The geological formation of Wady Darseyt is very singular, offering a contrast between the volcanic rocks on the eastern side and sedimentary rocks on the western, and the sandstone here is largely quarried and taken to Muscat, to be used for building purposes. Next to Darseyt is the hamlet of Aient, and then we reach Ras Shateefi, at the corner of Muttrah Bay, four miles from Ras al-Ahmar, where there is a cove and village, and from here the coast falls again to the south as far as Arbak, the western suburb of Muttrah.

The town of Muttrah is defended by a strong wall with two gates (Bab al-Kebeer and Bab al-Methayib) and four bastions; at the east end the citadel is on a commanding eminence, and in the centre of the town is a walled enclosure called the Soor al-Lowatya, occupied by the Khoja community, into which no others are admitted. The length of the town, bounded by high rocks at each end, is about half a mile, having some good houses, while the bazaar is larger and better stocked than that of Muscat. The inhabitants, who are very cosmopolitan, are located entirely within the walls, the exposure to hostile raids by the Arabs of the interior preventing the people from residing outside. The harbour is wide and capacious, with good anchorage for native craft. The only pass between this town and

Muscat is a rocky defile, impassable for laden animals, communication being almost exclusively by water, employing a large number of canoes in ferrying passengers from one town to the other; these canoes have to go round by Ras Muscat, passing on the way three villages at the mouth of the ravines, Mataira, Riyam, and Kalbuh.

Egress from Muscat by land being almost impracticable, Muttrah, which is distant half a mile in a straight line and a mile and half by sea, takes its place as a starting-point and terminus for caravans and wayfarers journeying to and from the interior, the consequent traffic being very considerable.

Situated at the end of the cove at the base of an amphitheatre of lofty, sombre, and arid peaks, some of which are surmounted by towers and lying between two elevated and imposing looking forts, Muscat presents a scene strikingly grand and picturesque. The harbour or cove is formed by an island, rocky, bare, and precipitous, 350 feet high and three-quarters of a mile long, lying outside it; this island being only disconnected from the mainland by a narrow and shallow channel, the entrance is at the northern end, where it is guarded by a tower at each point, that on the island being called Seeret al-Sharkiya, and that on the other being called Seeret al-Gharbiyeh. Concealed from sight by the island the port is invisible from seaward until a ship rounds the entrance, when the whole scene of town and shipping bursts on the view; the ancient name given to it by the Greeks of "Cryptos limeen," or the "Hidden Port," is therefore most appropriate. This island, though forming an effective breakwater to the north and east, leaves the harbour exposed to the north-west, and during the prevalence of gales in the cold season there is often a heavy swell and surf, which continues for two or three days.

On the west side of the harbour is a small cove, known as Moculla, perfectly sheltered from all winds, and used by native craft, which can lie in safety and be careened. Down to the sixteenth century this cove was called "Moculla Chini," and is mentioned under that name in the "Decadas" of Barros and Couto, being probably the place where the Chinese vessels anchored in former times.

On entering Muscat harbour the two most conspicuous objects are the forts, commanding and defending the town. That on the eastern side, constructed by the Portuguese in 1589, named by them " San Joao," or " St. John," now called by the Arabs Jelali, or the " Glorious," consists of two high towers joined by a long curtain pierced by two tiers of embrasures, and is rendered inaccessible by the isolated rock on which it stands being scarped on all sides, and is only approachable by a flight of steps cut out of the solid rock. The western fort, called by the Portuguese " Fort Capitan," now known to the Arabs as " Merani," having received the name from that of a Belooch commandant, was constructed in 1588, according to the inscription over the gate. The fort is large and irregular and has been designed with much skill and judgment; in the upper part is a small circular chapel with an inscription to the Virgin and has a holy water cup outside, from which the fort is often called Kalaat al-Tasa, or the " Fort of the Cup," by the Arabs. Some of the iron guns in the fort are rusty and honeycombed, and would probably burst when fired, but in the estimation of the Arabs this trifling defect does not in the least detract from their value and importance; one of the iron guns lying unmounted has the arms and superscription of " Don Philippe," while another bears the name of " Don Juan de Cunha," with the date 1606. The town is protected by a rampart and a broad ditch, all of Portuguese construction, the tower at the eastern end being known as Booma Salih. The wall is pierced by two gates, " the large " and " small," the latter being close to the covered bazaar, which is extensive and well supplied. The town is compactly built with a few large and handsome houses, but with short, irregular, and narrow streets; it is divided into fourteen haras or quarters, and on the front, near the beach, are the Palace, Harem, and Custom House. The Custom House was built in 1624, according to a date on the door, soon after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz, when their trading centre was transferred to Muscat.

The Sultan's palace, now about a century old, is built on the foundations of an old sea wall called Sikket al-Mudfa, erected by

the Portuguese, which extended along the front and was mounted with sixty large cannon, and is mentioned by Hamilton as still standing in his time. Not far from the Sultan's palace stands the old Portuguese "Gareza," or cathedral, built about 1630, a detached three-storied edifice, comprising the church, the factory, barracks, and store room, etc. Subsequent to the recovery of Muscat by the Arabs in 1650 it formed the residence of the Imams for many years until the erection of the present palace. Contiguous to and connected with the palace is the harem, with a broad wooden balcony overlooking the harbour, which was built for the accommodation of Seyyid Saeed's ladies, the number of whom is said to have been three hundred. Madame Helfer has given an interesting account of her visit to this harem, which is here transcribed :—

> "After a short ride we reached the palace, where our visit had been announced. A wooden staircase, rather dark and not over clean, led to the upper floor of the ancient building, the lower apartments of which were wide open. We passed through several empty rooms before we reached a spacious apartment, in which there was quite an assemblage of women. There was a great variety in their age, appearance, and costume, as there was also among the children with them ; I reckoned that altogether there were over a hundred persons ; they were the Imam's concubines and attendants of his legitimate wife and the princesses. On our entrance they all rose and ranged themselves on one side to allow us to pass. Our rapid passage through the room allowed me no time to observe them. At the further end a large door was opened by one of the women, which led into the interior of the harem, the apartment of the Imam's lawful wife. Here there were four ladies, his mother, wife, daughter, and one of his sisters. The former was in the dark unadorned dress appropriate to a widow ; she had thrown aside her veil, and sat erect upon raised cushions a little apart from the other ladies, whom she appeared to rule.
>
> "The Imam's wife, on the contrary, glittered in all the usual

oriental splendour. Dressed in the most costly silks, richly embroidered in gold and silver, with ornaments of emeralds, pearls, and rubies, she was seated upon bright coloured cushions, interwoven with silver thread, spread upon handsome carpets. Her daughter, a girl of from twelve to fifteen, lay by her side, her delicate limbs only covered by a transparent crapelike material, of reddish-purple colour, permitting one to admire the proportions of her slender form; but her face, as well as those of the others, was concealed by a wire mask, like the stone-breaker's spectacles, covering forehead, nose, and cheeks down to the mouth, with oval openings for the eyes, the black edges of which enhanced the effect of their dark colour. These masks, ornamented with jewels of every hue, seemed to be not only intended to conceal the features, but to be articles of the toilet, considered to increase the beauty of the wearers, as the glittering gems formed an excellent foil to their black hair and dark complexions.

"There was a large, bronze, four-post bedstead in the room, with crimson velvet hangings, and the posts were specimens of artistic work. The Imam's wife said, pointing to it with evident pride, 'It is a present from Queen Victoria, ruler of England, my dear sister.' So the royal fellowship among sovereigns extends even to this remote corner of the world. The lady spoke further of the friendly relations between her husband and Her Britannic Majesty, and said that she had presented him with a beautiful fire-ship. The Queen-mother was hemming a pocket handkerchief, and seeing me looking at it she showed it to me, and asked if she was doing it properly; she said that she had learnt to sew from European ladies, and was very fond of it; this was the first and only time that I ever saw an Asiatic lady employing herself in needlework. A eunuch came in before long and respectfully laid a letter at her feet; she hastily opened it, and told me it was from the Imam, who, being absent in the wars, had sent her an account of his achievements. It seemed to please her very much to have this opportunity of displaying

her superior talents. Costly fruits and preserves were afterwards served for us on crystal plates. The ladies then all withdrew into an adjoining department. I thought this very strange, but was told that it was the custom, in order that the visitor may eat as much as she likes. This is certainly a delicate trait of hospitality in countries where the stranger may travel all day through burning deserts, hungry and thirsty, and must eat prospectively. I thought of our ride to Baghdad, and the preliminary meal of the Aniza Arabs, before they felt able to appear as guests at our table, on board the *Euphrates*, without compromising their dignity; hunger is a bad master of the ceremonies.

"When the ladies re-appeared, our metamorphosed sailor boy was looking wistfully at the dainties before him. The princesses invited him to help himself, but glancing at his girdle, which was not so easy as his sailor's jacket, he said, 'My belly is so full,' which, being interpreted into Arabic, caused a smile to play on the delicate ladies' lips. They invited him to stow away as much as he could in his ample trousers; he did not require pressing, and soon stuffed them so full that his head and arms appeared to grow out of two elephant's legs, and he looked droll enough.

"I had observed that the ladies often regarded me with abashed looks, and after looking me in the face, cast down their eyes. On enquiry I learned that my uncovered face was as repulsive to them as the sight of a naked person would be to us. They begged to be allowed to put me on a mask, and after an attendant had tied on a very ornamental one, they all exclaimed 'Tahip, Tahip!' (beautiful, beautiful!)

"For the second time I made the humiliating discovery that appreciation of my beauty did not depend on my personal charms but entirely on my toilet. Is it so very different in Europe, the home par excellence of the arts and æsthetics? The curious thing here was the careful concealment of the face, while the figure was so insufficiently covered with transparent crape.

I was told that this custom is very strictly observed and that the sight of an uncovered female face is most painful, even to women themselves. A mother does not even see her daughter's face uncovered after her twelfth year; her husband only has the right of lifting her mask. After many questions and reciprocal communications, in which the princesses showed more intelligence and cultivation than any Mussulman women I had met with, or even the Asiatic Christians, I took leave of them, giving them back the beautiful mask with regret, for I should have liked to have retained it as a keepsake."

The population of Muscat may be roughly estimated at 30,000 or 40,000, but a small portion only of this number reside within the town, the bulk of the people living outside the walls in huts constructed of date stick reed, split bamboos, and mats, gable roofed and rarely exceeding twelve feet in height.

Leaving the town by the Lesser Gate the path leads to a suburb called Sedab, where there is a small bay almost landlocked. On the way is a low pass defended by a tower and gate, the view from which is extremely picturesque. The path leading from the large gate has seven branches, one leading to Kalbuh, another to Riyam, and a third, very deep and rugged, to Muttrah, while a fourth takes one through Tuyan or "The Wells," to the Wady Kebeer, at the top of which is a pass from which it is possible to descend into the Sehal Harmel and the village of Rowi. During the siege of 1877 an incident occurred which is thus narrated by Grattan Geary in his work *Through Asiatic Turkey*:—

"Not very long since Her Majesty's gunboat *Teazer*, lying in the harbour, was called upon to fire over the town at a crowd of Bedouins who had insolently taken up a position beyond the line of hills to the south, in the hope of finding their way into Muscat and sacking it. The shells created a great moral effect, the Arabs never having seen such missiles before. They said the shells had eyes and could see where to fall. They

could not understand how otherwise the shells could come right into their midst, as they were, of course, out of the view of the gunners on board the *Teazer*, the hills intervening. The fire was really directed by signals from an old Portuguese tower on the summit of one of the hills. A shell fell in a field and did not explode. It was immediately surrounded by a number of excited Bedouins, who determined at once to put out the 'eye'—the copper percussion fuse—by which it guides its course. They struck the 'eye' with their lances, the shell exploded, and eleven Bedouins were killed on the spot. Of course the marauders ultimately decamped."

At Muscat as well as at the chief trading ports of the Batineh coast a small number of Hindoo merchants from Cutch have established themselves. These shrewd and enterprising Banians, by their superior capacity and knowledge, have a controlling influence in commercial transactions and not only acquire considerable fortunes for themselves but by their operations as bankers, brokers, and moneylenders render indispensable service to Arabs of all classes. They are engaged chiefly in importing Manchester, American, and Bombay piece-goods, rice, metals, and other requirements of Arab life.

The word Muscat means anchorage, literally the place of "letting fall the anchor," and the appellation has no doubt descended from remote times. In its commanding and convenient position as a strong emporium on the highway of ocean commerce between the East and the West, Muscat possesses advantages, strategic and commercial. Its secure harbour, its inaccessibility by land, and its natural strength point it out as a place of high value and importance, standing not only as the "Key of the Persian Gulf," but as a central place of trade for Persia, India, East Africa, and Mesopotamia. In the palmy days of Babylonia, Muscat monopolized and controlled the seaborne trade between India and Mesopotamia, and Arrian, although ignorant of its true position, notes that it was the seat of trade in those parts, while under the Yaareba Dynasty Muscat rose

to a dominant position in the East in the hands of a powerful nation.

The plutonic rocks, amongst which Muscat lies embosomed, may be said to cover an area of about thirty square miles, extending from Darseyt on the west to Ras Jisseh on the east, coming in contact at these points with the nummulithic limestone formation generally prevalent in the country. Of these igneous rocks we have fortunately been given an elaborate and interesting description by Dr. H. J. Carter, who informs us that " this group consists of serpentine, green stone, and basalt, and that in these three products we have the type of all the igneous masses in South-East Arabia." The most universal and conspicuous of these rocks is a sombre black serpentine, similar to that at the Lizard Point in Cornwall, but the group is also composed of diorite, felspar, quartz, horneblende and steatite. On the beach at Muscat and Muttrah is to be found a contemporaneous conglomerate, from high-water mark downwards, composed of recent shells, serpentine and corals. Outside the volcanic area ferruginous sandstone is to be seen together with the yellow nummulithic limestone and other rocks. Besides the valuable memoirs on the geology of Muscat by Dr. Carter above referred to, we have the observation of Captain Newbolt and Mr. W. T. Blanford on the subject.

Passing in succession the sandy beaches and fishing hamlets of Haramel, Rowtha, the two Bostans, and Kantab, belonging to the Beni Wahaib and Beni Hassan tribes, we come to Jisseh, a town at the bottom of a ravine six miles from Muscat, with a good cove protected by an island. Being inaccessible from the interior and a safe anchorage it was taken possession of by the Joasmees during their supremacy at sea in the early days of the nineteenth century as a base for their piratical fleet. At Jisseh the metamorphic rocks are bounded and overlapped by yellow limestone, and Carter remarks that " this limestone formation is continued on for thirty miles in an extremely broken condition, being raised up in ridges one after another." After this distance the formation loses its broken character and passes into round and isolated hills, which are terminated by the great inland ridge approaching the sea to form the fourth boundary of the ' Devil's Gap.' "

Returning to Jisseh we find that the next place, Yiti, is a small fishing village at the mouth of the Wady Maih, which is a continuation of the Wady Hatat and is well watered and cultivated, being one of the market gardens of Muscat. The population of this valley is about 1,000, occupying four villages, *i.e.*, Mizra Alowi, Mizra Sefara (belonging to the Maashera tribe), Rezaa and Yiti, which belong to the Beni Wahaib. The houses are on the banks of the stream, which is perennial, and the gardens are chiefly pensile, oleanders abounding here.

Hatat is a small plain environed by hills and is called by three or four names, and the tribes occupying it are the Beni Battash, Beni Wahaib, Beni Jabir, Beni Hassan and Maashera. The rocks are very curious and in every variety of colour and shape, while the action of fire is very apparent, the strata being very confused and contorted, lying in arches over blocks of limestone, having apparently been at one time in a molten state. On the right bank of the Wady Maih, about one mile from Yiti, are the ruins of an old fort and town. From this and as far as Abu Daood the coast is irregular with low cliffs alternating with sandy beaches. At a distance of seven miles below Yiti we find Bundar Khairan, a cove formed by two islets, occasionally used as a refuge in bad weather by native craft and visited by Muscat fishermen, but there are no permanent habitations because the water obtainable here is very brackish and at a great depth. The ruins of an old fort are to be seen near the beach, which is claimed by the Beni Wahaib, who occupy the coast between Yiti and Abu Daood. In 1872 a large dhow, with a full cargo of slaves which had sought concealment here, was captured by H.M.S. *Magpie* and brought to Muscat for adjudication.

Next to Bundar Khairan is a little cove half a mile deep, formed by a peninsula known as Ras Keziakigan, then we come to three small bays, the centre one of which is called Khaisat al-Shaikh, after which follows a large bay, called Ghubbet al-Sifa, in which is a village of the same name, a tower, and the usual date grove, while in this bay is the outlet of the Wady Seraya.

Passing Dhahar al-Badir we reach Ras Abu Daood, twelve miles

from Sifa. Ras Abu Daood is the most salient promontory between Cape Mussendom and Ras al-Had, and stands out 4,000 feet in elevation ; the cliff, beginning four miles north-west of Abu Daood, continues nearly to Kuriyat. After passing the Wady Mylis, which rises in the hills above Suakim and forms a small creek, we arrive at Kuriyat al-Kabeera, an ancient town with a small fort, which probably owed its prestige and former prosperity to its proximity to the Wady Thaika, and by its trade with the interior, and though devoid of any shelter for vessels, it possesses several large bughlas and trades direct with India. The population of the whole district may be 3,000 to 4,000, composed of the Beni Sinan and Beni Battash and other tribes, who are a turbulent and quarrelsome people, always at variance with each other and setting the Sultan's Wali at defiance ; it has very extensive date groves and there is a fine avenue of mango trees. In former times the plain above Kuriyat was a pasture ground for breeding horses, which, according to Marco Polo, were shipped in great numbers to India from Kilhat; but this trade appeared to have ceased in the sixteenth century during the occupation of the Portuguese. The great cluster of mountains on the north side of Wady Thaika, or the " Devil's Gap," are called Jebel Nakhl or Jebel Sotari, and culminates in a peak 6,200 feet high, eighteen miles from the sea ; upon this peak, we are told by the sapient young traveller Ibn al-Mojawir, rests the anchor of Noah's Ark.

Seven miles from Kuriyat al-Kabeera is Kuriyat al-Sagheera, a small village to the south, and six miles further is the settlement of Hail, near which runs the Wady of that name. This place was founded by Seyyid Khalban, who was Governor of Muscat at the time of Franklin's visit in 1787.

We have now arrived at the great valley called by the Arabs Wady Thaika, or Hail Ghaf, and known to Europeans as the " Devil's Gap," a narrow cañon cut through the hills by the water of the Wady Tyeen ; the bluff on the northern side of the gap is called Nuwai, while that on the southern is called Naab.

Leaving Kuriyat the first place on the coast is Ras Lowaiz, and then we come to Al-Hajir of the Beni Battash, while the village

of Dhibab, which comes next, is inhabited by the Beni Jabir and the Beni Wahaib. Bama, a village of the Al-Ghadana, which tribe occupies also Dagmar and Fins, is inhabited by a branch of the Beni Jabir, but as their own tribe could not protect them they affiliated themselves to the Beni Battash.

South of the Devil's Gap valley is the great mass known as Jebel Jabir, which takes its name from the powerful tribe inhabiting it, the Beni Jabir, who descend from the Dhobyan and are still at feud with their ancient enemy the Abs. Of this mountain range Carter gives the following description :—

> " Here there is a break, and no cliff for a few miles, until the ridge, which forms the opposite or southern boundary of the opening of the valley, commences, and this, attaining a height of 4,400 feet, not above eight miles from the sea, presents, as may be conceived, an immense mural surface in this direction.
>
> " From the summit of the ridge here, which is called Jibal Jabir, the land descends to the sea in two or three gigantic cliffs, and is thus scarped the whole way to the town of Soor."

Thirty-eight miles from Kuriyat is Ras Shajr, or " One Tree Point," a low spit, but the second most prominent cape between Muscat and Ras al-Had. The ravine here is Seil al-Aswad, " the Black Torrent," and another ravine near is Wady Ghowaisa, just opposite the shoal on which the sailing ship *Marion Moore* was wrecked in 1879.

On the headland, Ras Shajr, is a village of the Beni Jabir, called Amk al-Lakoot, while between Ras Shajr and Gheil al-Shaab are Ras Fins, with a village and tower and owning ten badans, and Moculla Wabr, an anchorage for fishing boats. From this part of the coast the high peak of the Jebel Jabir range, 4,400 feet, is clearly visible. The village of Shaab is on the right bank of a backwater a mile and a half long, leading up to a steep and rocky defile, forming a pass into the interior. About three miles up, the torrent falls in a series of cascades and there are several villages with pensile gardens,

the scenery here being very romantic and picturesque. The flow of water from the hills is copious and perennial, but the creek is sheltered and has a sandy bar at the entrance, where the sea filters in at high tide; the word Shaab means a "ravine between cliffs," and well describes the lagoon, which has lofty and almost vertical sides.

About two miles from Shaab is Taiwee, situated at the mouth of a deep ravine with deep sides running up for many miles. In the upper part it is called Wady Bair, which is said to be fertile and well-peopled, and contains nine villages, namely, Taiwee, Hassan, Hallet bin Eesa, Hallet, Bidda, Al-Akr, Saima, Sowi, Mibâm, and Amk Kobair. Taiwee is a town with a beautiful wooded creek and a large pool of fresh water, near which are date groves and gardens, while not far from the beach is the burial ground of the Turks of Kirman who invaded the country, many of whom fell in a battle that took place in the vicinity; it is also the chief port of the Beni Jabir, and has a considerable trade, the people possessing fourteen badans or coasting craft; by many Shaikhs Taiwee is considered the boundary between Oman and Al-Sharkya, but the limit is generally placed at the "Devil's Gap," as above stated. South of Wady Taiwee, and separated from it by a narrow ridge only, is Wady Fakk, which has the appearance of a mere chasm or cleft, and though shorter than Taiwee, has a more abundant supply of water. Near Taiwee are the ruins of an old town called Jereit, of which only a tower remains standing. Four miles further on we come to the Wady Haiwi, a small ravine situated in an indentation of the coast where the hills are composed of a very pure creamy limestone, which is extensively exported to Bombay for conversion into lime. There are two villages in this wadi, Hareem and Taab, the Shaikh of the latter place controlling the coast as far as Dhibab.

Passing Ghubbet Haidi and Ras Bu Mogheera we arrive after eight miles at the ruined city of Kilhat, situated between two creeks in an opening in the hills which here rise abruptly from the sea. This famous city, now desolated and deserted, was at one period the most important seaport of Oman and the principal emporium of her

commerce. Marco Polo, who visited it in the thirteenth century, gives the following account of its trade and condition at that time :—

> " Calatu is a great city, within a gulf which bears the name of the Gulf of Calatu. It is a noble city, and lies 600 miles from Dufar towards the north-west, upon the seashore. The people are Saracens, and are subject to Hormos. And whenever the Melic of Hormos is at war with some prince more potent than himself, he betakes himself to this city of Calatu, because it is very strong, both from its position and its fortifications. They grow no corn here, but get it from abroad, for every merchant vessel that comes brings some. The haven is very large and good, and is frequented by numerous ships with goods from India, and from this city the spices and other merchandise are distributed among the cities and towns of the interior. They also export many good Arab horses to India. For, as I have told you before, the number of horses exported from this and the other cities to India yearly is something astonishing."

According to tradition Kilhat was destroyed by an earthquake about four centuries ago. From this time its decadence was rapid and complete, though Albuquerque in 1507 found it still occupied by a governor sent from Hormuz. The site of the ruins is on the littoral declivity of the range known as Jebel Kilhat, but in former times the city was very extensive, for every available spot is strewn with the debris of houses and buildings. The line of fortification, which guarded the town on the south side, can still be traced without difficulty, there being three bastions which ran from the sea to the precipitous part of the hills behind the town, where it terminated ; while towards the north the town was protected by two towers on a small eminence called Al-Shaikh. Under this hill lies the present village of Kilhat, inhabited by the Al-Saabiyeen, a tribe of 300 souls, who have inherited all that remains of the ancient splendour of the city.

Issuing from the hills and dividing the town is a deep ravine called the Wady Issa, the mouth of which is very broad and previous

to the earthquake formed the harbour, up which vessels could ascend for half a mile and anchor abreast of the town, but it is now so choked that only the smallest boats can enter it; the Wady Issa at that time provided the natural highway into the interior, but is now much impeded by boulders of rock which have fallen from above. Half a mile up it is Maida, a deep pool under a perpendicular cliff, and two miles further on is Sakhers, where the Issa is joined by the Wady Kabdi on the left bank. From hence ran the aqueduct that supplied the ancient city with water, the square cistern that received the spring being still in good preservation.

After Kilhat, the mountain range, as Carter remarks, falls in two or three gigantic cliffs almost to the level of the sea as far as the town of Soor, twelve miles distant. Close to Kilhat is Ras al-Hafar with a hamlet of the Fazasija tribe; then comes Resagh Khor al-Jena, a hamlet of the Howajir, after which we arrive at a small headland, Ras al-Had al-Soor, the name of which appears to have caused some confusion in the works of old writers, who often allude to Ras al-Had as "Rosalgate," mistaking one point for another. Soor, the most important harbour for native craft in Oman, next to Muscat, formerly consisted of two towns, one about two miles inland, called Al-Balad or Soor Soor, and the other on the shore called Al-Sahil; the former, however, was destroyed by the Wahabees many years ago and is now deserted, but the present town is divided into two parts by a backwater and is inhabited by two tribes who are not on good terms with each other. The eastern and larger portion is on a low cliff named Eijah and belongs to the Beni Bu Ali, who derive from the Beni Teman tribe of ancient fame, and number about 6,000; four towers here protect the settlement. The western portion comprises four mohulles, *i.e.*, Om Khareematein, Ruaka, Mokha, and Moosafee, the first named being the largest with 1,500 mat houses; there are also two hamlets with towers, Sheera and Senaisila. This part is occupied by the Jenebeh, who are about 5,000 strong, but other tribes are also represented here. Date palm and other fruits are largely grown and there is a good deal of cultivation. The harbour is formed by a creek running up tortuously for

some distance, half encircling the town, and is deep enough for the largest bughlas, which can be built, launched, and laid up in ordinary during the winter monsoon. They build about a dozen vessels of all sizes every year, the shipwrights being Indians and Arabs, teak being mainly used which is brought from Malabar. In the year 1874 Soor possessed fifty-six large bughlas, besides bateels, zainas, and 150 badans. The eastern part of Oman is chiefly supplied with foreign goods through Soor, the other parts of Oman being supplied through Muscat, which has steamer traffic with India. The Wali is appointed from Muscat, but has little jurisdiction, as this is mainly exercised by the Temeemeh of the Beni Bu Ali and Jenebeh tribes, who alone have authority over their people and are responsible for keeping order.

The customs are farmed to the Hindoo traders for 2,000 dollars, but this amount might easily be doubled were the Sultan strong enough to enforce payment. The Soories have ever borne, in the Indian Ocean, an unenviable reputation as pirates, kidnappers, and slave-traders, and the port was generally regarded in former days as the largest slave depôt in the Arabian Sea. The climate of Soor is dry and healthy, but the water is bad and has to be brought in skins from a considerable distance.

The word Soor means rock, and is identical with the name of the Phœnician city on the coast of Palestine, better known by the Grecian name of Tyre. It was probably so called from the cliff on which the town of Eijah stands, and may be more ancient than the Mediterranean port, as the Phœnicians must have passed by Oman on their way up the Persian Gulf. Ibn Batuta landed at Soor on his way from Dhofar to Persia, and as his journey into the interior is interesting it is here given.

Ibn Batuta.

In the year 731 A.H. [A.D. 1330] the most famous of Eastern travellers, Abu Abdulla Mohammed bin Abdulla al-Lawaty, commonly known as Ibn Batuta, arrived in Oman from Dhofar on his way to Persia and Turkey. His account is short but very interesting,

and is the more valuable as it occurs at a period which is left blank in the annals of the native historians. He is, moreover, one of the most recent of foreign Arab authors on Oman, and I therefore give here a full translation of his narrative from the text of Sanquinette :—

"Thus we sailed from the Mursa Hasek for four days and arrived at Jebel Qumaan, which is in the midst of the sea, and on the top of it is a hermitage built of stone and roofed with the bones of fish. Outside of it is a cistern containing rain water."

Account of a Saint whom we saw on this mount.

"After we had anchored under this hill, we ascended to the hermitage and found there a shaikh asleep. We saluted him and then he got up and returned our salutations by signs. We spoke to him but he did not reply and merely shook his head. Then the people of the ship brought him food but he declined to accept it. Then we asked for his blessing and he moved his lips but we did not know what he said. He wore a tattered garment and Greek felt cap but he had neither water skin nor even staff nor shoes. The men on board said they had never seen him before on that mountain. We remained all that night on the shore under the hill and we prayed with him in the afternoon and at sunset. We brought him food but he refused it and he remained praying until the time for the last prayer at night when he gave the call and we prayed with him. He had a good voice for reading aloud and when he had finished the last prayer he signalled us to leave him, so we took our leave and retired, being surprised at his behaviour. Then I desired to return to him after we had gone some distance, but when I approached I felt discouraged and fear overcame me and I rejoined my companions and went away with them. We embarked on the sea and arrived after two days at the Island of Birds, on which there are no inhabitants. So we anchored there and descended on it and found it full of birds like the Shakihak,

but larger than that, and our people collected the eggs of those birds and cooked them and eat them ; they also captured many of the birds and cooked them without sacrificing them and then eat them. Sitting by me was a merchant from the people of the Island of Maseera, but who resided at Zhafar. His name was Muselliun. I saw him also eating those birds with them and I remonstrated with him about it. He was much ashamed and said to me, 'I thought they had sacrificed them,' and he separated himself from me after that from shame and did not come near me even when I invited him. My food in those days on that ship consisted of dates and fish. They caught morning and evening a fish called in Persian 'Shir Mahi,' the meaning of which is 'lion fish,' as Shir is lion and Mahi is fish. It is like the fish called among us 'Tazirat.' They cut it into pieces and cook it and give a piece to every one in the ship, not respecting one above another, not even the Captain of the ship, and except no one, and they eat it with dates. I had brought with me some bread and cakes from Zhafar, and when this was consumed I subsisted on the fish like all the others. We passed the Eed el-Adhhar and then came upon us that day a gale of wind after daybreak and it lasted till the next sunrise, and we were in danger of sinking."

Miracle.

"On board the ship there was with us an Indian Hajji named Khidhr, and called Muland because he could remember the Koran and was caligraphist. When this man saw the terribleness of the sea he covered his head with his cloak and pretended to go to sleep. After God had dispelled the storm I said to him, 'O, Mulana Khidhr, what did you see?' He replied, 'While I was in terror I opened my eyes to see whether the angels who receive the souls had come, but could not discover them so I said to myself, "Al Hamdo lillah! if we were destined to sink they would have come to take the souls," so I shut my eyes again. Then I opened them but saw no angels

as before until God had removed the danger.' And there was in front of us a ship belonging to some merchants which sank and none escaped from it but one man who reached land by swimming after great exertions.

" I eat on board that vessel a kind of food which I had never tasted before nor since. It was made by a merchant of Oman and was composed of unground jowari boiled, with date treacle poured over it and then eaten. Then we arrived at the island of Maseera, to which the owner of the ship we were in belonged. This is the word ' Maseera ' with an ' h ' added on to make it feminine. The island is large and there is no food for the people but fish. We did not land there on account of the distance of the anchorage from the shore, and I was prejudiced against the people since I saw them eat the birds without sacrificing them.

" We remained there one day while the owner of the vessel went to his house and returned. Then we sailed a day and a night and arrived at the harbour of a large town on the seashore named Soor, and we could see from it the city of Kilhat, at the foot of a mountain which we imagined to be close by. We arrived at the harbour about sunset, or before, and when the city came in view I desired to go there and pass the night in it, as I was disgusted at the society of the people in the ship, so I enquired the way thither and was informed that I should arrive there in the afternoon. Then I engaged one of the seamen to show me the way, and Khidhr, the Indian whom I mentioned before, accompanied me. I left my companions with what belonged to me in the ship and they were to rejoin me the following day. I took all my clothes and handed them to that guide to save myself the trouble of carrying them, and in my hand I carried a lance. But the guide wished to get possession of my clothes so he brought us to a tidal creek of the sea which he was preparing to cross with my clothes, but I said to him, ' You may go across alone and leave the clothes with us ; if we can cross here we will do so, and if not we will go higher up

and seek for a ford.' Upon this he returned to us and then we noticed men swimming across, so we became certain that he had designed to drown us and make off with the clothes. I immediately feigned hilarity and though I kept on my guard and girded my loins, I shook my spear and the guide feared me.

" We continued to ascend until we came to a defile, from which we merged on a plain without water. We were greatly distressed by thirst but God sent us a horseman with a large retinue, one of whom had in his hand a bottle of water. He gave me a drink and my companions also, and we went on, thinking the city was near to us, but between us and it were nullahs, along which we walked many miles. When it was evening the guide wished to turn us in the direction of the sea where there was no road as the shore is rocky, his idea being to entangle us there and to go off with the clothes. So I told him we would walk only upon the road we were following, and there was between us and the sea about a mile.

" When it became dark he said to us, 'The city is quite near now, let us walk on briskly so that we may pass the night outside it until the morning.' I was afraid we might be stopped by some one on the road and I did not know what distance remained, so I said to him, ' It is best for us to quit the road and sleep somewhere, and when it is morning we will, please God, enter the city.' I had already noticed a party of men at the foot of a hill not far off and I was afraid they were thieves, and I said ' Concealment is the first thing.' My companion, however, was overcome by thirst and did not approve of that. Then I quitted the road and went to a tree called Um Gheilan, as I was fatigued and worn out with exertion, though I showed myself strong and active through fear of my guide, but my companion was quite ill and exhausted. I then placed the guide between myself and friend and I placed the clothes between my dress and my body and took the spear in my hand. My friend and the guide lay down to sleep but I remained awake, and whenever the guide moved I spoke to him and showed

him that I was watchful, and we did not stir from thence till the morning. We then returned to the road and found people bringing in needful things for the city. I then sent the guide to fetch us some water and my companion took the clothes to carry for me. Between us and the city were precipices and chasms. Then he brought some water and we drank, and by that time it had become hot. After that we arrived at the city of Kilhat, which is pronounced 'Kalhat,' and entered it. We were in great distress, myself especially. My shoe was so tight on my foot that it forced the blood to ooze out under the nails.

"When we arrived at the gate of the city it happened to seal our calamity, that the gatekeeper said to us, 'It is necessary you should come with me to the Ameer of the city that he may be acquainted with your affairs and with your destination.' So I went to him, and saw that he was a man of politeness and good qualities. He asked me concerning my state and took me in, and I remained with him six days, and I had no power to stand on my feet on account of their painful condition.

"The city of Kilhat is on the shore; there are handsome markets in it, and it has one of the most beautiful of all mosques, the walls of which are lined with Kashani tiles resembling enamel. It stands on an eminence overlooking the sea and the harbour; it was built by Bibi Miriam. The meaning of Bibi among them is freeborn.

"I eat in this city of a fish, the like of which I have never tasted in any other country. I liked it better than any other meat and I eat nothing else here; they cook it upon the leaf of a tree, put it on rice and eat it. The rice is brought to them from the land of India. The people here are merchants, and their provisions come to them by way of the Indian Sea. When a vessel arrives here great rejoicings take place. Their language is not pure although they are Arabs, and each sentence they use they turn into a question by adding 'la'—'no.' Thus, for instance, they say, 'You eat, no?' 'You walk, no?' 'You do so-and-so, no?' Most of them are Kharejites but they are

not able to follow their tenets outwardly, for they are under the dominion of Sultan Kutb ul-Deen, Malik of Hormuz, who is a Sunnite.

" In the neighbourhood of Kilhat is the village of Taibi (its name is like the word Tayyib and in speaking of it they attribute it to themselves), which is a most delightful suburb and very beautiful, having running streams, stately trees, and numerous gardens. From it they bring fruits to Kilhat, and in this place is a plant called El-Murrowari. El-Murrowari, in Persian, means jewels, and these plantains are very plentiful and are taken hence to Hormuz and other places. There is also to be found here the betel, but its leaves are small, and dates are brought to these parts from Oman.

" After that we desired to go to the country of Oman, and travelled six days through a level country and arrived at the province of Oman (Proper) on the seventh day. It is a land of plenty, full of streams and trees, and orchards of dates and fruits of many different kinds; and we came to the chief town of the district, viz., the city of Nezwa; the name is pronounced ' Nazwa.' This city is at the foot of a mountain and is surrounded by gardens and rivers; it has beautiful bazaars and the mosques are large and scrupulously clean. It is a custom of these people to dine in the courtyards of the mosques; each of them brings his own food, and they assemble together and eat in the court of the mosque. They are a bold and brave race and the tribes are perpetually at war with each other. They belong to the Ibadhi sect and pray on Fridays at noon four times. When they have finished prayers, the Imam reads verses from the Koran and delivers a discourse like the Khutba, in which he prays for Abu Bekr and Omar, but does not mention Othman and Alij. When they wish to mention Ali, may God be pleased with him, they designate him as the man; thus they say, ' It is related concerning the man ' or ' The man says.' They pray for the villain, the accursed Ibn Muljam, and call him Abd ul-Salih, Subdur of rebellion.

"Their women are greatly given to intrigue but the men show no jealousy about them and do not object to it. We shall relate a story after this in proof of it."

Account of the Sultan of Oman.

"The Sultan of it is an Arab of the stock of El-Azd bin el-Ghaoth and he is known as Abu Mohammed bin Nebhan, and Abu Mohammed among them is the name for all the Sultans who rule over Oman like that of Atabek is for the kings of Soor. He has the custom of sitting outside the door of his house in the place of assembly there. He has neither Chamberlain nor Minister and no one is forbidden to enter there, whether stranger or otherwise. He honours a guest according to the custom of the Arabs and provides his meals; he also makes him suitable presents. He is a man of superior qualities. At his table is eaten the flesh of the domesticated ass, which is also sold in the bazaar, for they declare it to be lawful, but they conceal the fact from foreigners coming there and do not produce it in their presence.

"Among the cities of Oman is the city of Zikky. I did not enter it but it was represented to me as a great city, and there are besides it El-Kuriat and Shibba and Kalba and Khor Fakan and Sohar; all these possess streams and orchards and date trees, and the greater part of this country is a dependency of Hormuz."

Anecdote.

"I was one day with this Sultan Abu Mohammed bin Nebhan when there came to him a woman, young in years, of graceful figure and with an unveiled face. She stood before him and said to him, 'O, Abu Mohammed, I am tormented by a devil in the head.' He replied, 'Go away and drive off the devil.' But she said to him, 'I cannot obey and I am under your protection, O, Abu Mohammed.' So he said to her, 'Go your way and do as you desire.' It was stated to me that when

she went, she and others, who have acted in the same way, because protected by the Sultan, led a dissolute life. Her father and her relations are not allowed to resent her conduct, and if they kill her they are killed in return, because she is protected by the Sultan."

Eastward of Soor is a line of low hills with a cliff known as Ras Kharaba, while six miles farther on is Ras Sheea, at the mouth of a wady running up a long distance, with pools of water; it has no settled inhabitants but is frequented by shepherds, who pasture their sheep and goats.

At a distance of five miles we reach Khor Jeramah, a large and deep inlet with a long, narrow, serpentine entrance, about 150 yards broad, spreading out into a wide basin. The channel is nearly a mile in length and winds so much that it is difficult for a vessel to enter except in slack water. Once inside, however, a vessel finds itself in smooth water, and it is chiefly frequented by bughlas waiting to sail across to India or Zanzibar. At the south end are the ruins of a village called Lebeed, formerly occupied by the Mowalik tribe, and on the western side are a few huts and some thickets of mangroves. Khor Jeramah is the "Corodamon" of Ptolemy, and known to, and used by, the Greeks 2,000 years ago, who took shelter here before setting out for the opposite coast. Khor Jeramah belongs to the Mowalik, the boundary between whom and the Beni Bu Ali is at Wady Sheea.

Close by is Khor Hajara, a small and sheltered inlet or creek having a narrow entrance between high banks. It extends about two miles but is partly dry at low water and is only used by badans, as there is not sufficient depth of water for large craft.

We now arrive at Ras al-Had, or "Cape Finisterre," or "Land's End," where the coast falls to the south. It is very low, being merely a sandy spit, 300 yards long, with a village called Belad Ras al-Had, having a date grove and a fort with three towers. The people are known as Beni-wa-Beni, being of various tribes, three in particular, *i.e.*, the Beni Malik, Beni Ghozal, and Beni Mahra, the last named

tracing its pedigree to a Mahra ancestor, and behind the village is a plain two or three miles square. From Ras al-Had the coast trends in a generally south-westerly direction to Ras Shajr, the limit of the Sultan's jurisdiction, a distance of 600 statute miles, presenting a succession of curved sandy bays, separated by headlands without a single natural harbour, and as the great desert is here bordered by the sea, a few signs of life are to be seen. South of Ras al-Had is Al-Kutna, inhabited by the Mowalik tribe, and below this, seven miles from the point, is Ras al-Janaiz, a low cliff, forming the most eastern extremity of Arabia. Near this, and ten miles from Ras al-Had, are two remarkable hills, close together but isolated from any others and of equal height (859 feet), making a good landmark. They are quoin-shaped and are known as Jebel Saffan, and are, Carter suggests, probably of igneous origin.

Beyond Ras al-Janaiz are Ras al-Khabba, Khaisat al-Jeera, and Ras al-Daffa, these four places belonging to the Wilad Harbi. Down to Ras Khabba, twenty miles from Ras al-Had, the coast runs due north and south and is bold and rocky.

The next point is Ras Rowais, which is said to be geologically interesting, the low cliffs being of yellow limestone, about 100 feet high, with horizontal strata. Ras Rowais, like Ras al-Khabba, belongs to the Jenebeh tribe, who have a large village at the former point. After Ras Rowais comes Um al-Direes, of the Beni Bu Ali, and then Sowaih Beni Bu Ali, marked by a large rock leading to a depression inland, formerly under water.

Between Ras Rowais and Ras Komaila, which is twelve miles to the south-west, lies the small point called Ras al-Solaib, or the "Cape of the Cross," so called, it is said, from a stone cross erected over a Portuguese grave. Ras Komaila is a low sandy point with a conical hill of the same name behind it, and a large village about a mile to the north, belonging to the Jenebeh. There are said to be water tanks constructed by the Portuguese on the coast not far off.

Passing Ejasa, a hamlet of the Jenebeh, we come, after ten miles, to Al-Askhara, a town of about 1,000 souls, of the Jaafera, a sub-tribe of the Beni Bu Ali. Al-Askhara is near the beach and the houses,

a few of which are of stone, are much scattered ; it has two towers, and the people possess thirty badans, which are sheltered under a low reef of rocks. In 1820 the interpreter of the East India Company's sloop *Mercury* was murdered here, and this affair resulted in the dispatch of two military expeditions against the tribe, an account of which will be found elsewhere. In 1862 a schooner from India was wrecked near here and the Arabs promptly seized and plundered the vessel. The European crew, however, were kindly treated and sent overland to Muscat. The diet they received on the way—camel's milk and dates—did not agree with them, and the usual native remedy, the actual cautery, was used by the application of red hot coins, so that on the arrival of the sailors at Muscat they appeared spotted like leopards. In 1874 the Jaafera Arabs pirated a Dutch puttimar at Kooria Mooria, and the Political Agent proceeded in H.M.S. *Philomel* to obtain redress. The tribe would not surrender the culprits and a fine was therefore imposed, eight hostages being taken until the fine was paid.

From hence to Athlataine the coast is very irregular and barren and belongs to the Jenebeh tribe. The first headland we come to is Ras Jaffan, and then two more headlands, Ras Sarik, or " Thieves Point," and Ras Sikla. We then come to Ras Jibsh, or Kuroon, thirty miles from Askhara. This is a dark rock, about 100 feet high, of volcanic formation, composed of euphotide, diorite, and hornblende, having an old tower on the top and a hamlet on the south-west side. On the north side of Jibsh is a small bay, which in former times was connected with a long creek or backwater two miles square, but which is now dry, being twelve feet above the level of the sea. From this point we catch the last glimpse of Jebel Jaalan, the south-western extremity of the great range of Oman, which at the western end is about 2,000 feet in elevation, being distant about fifty statute miles. Many points on the coast have two or more names, one used by seafarers and one by the Bedouins on shore, and the following is a case in point, Ras Ashreen being known to seafarers as Shaiballa.

From Ras Jibsh to Ras Ashreen, or Shaiballa, is a stretch of forty-five miles, partly low cliffs and partly sandy shore, with scrub

or bushes, otherwise devoid of verdure, the places between being Ras Hanno, or Groon, and Athlataine, or Sherkh, which lies midway and gives its name to the bay among the Bedouins, while among seafarers it is generally known as Battain. This place, Sherkh, which is twenty-two miles from Ras Ashreen, used to be one of the places on the coast where small cargoes of slaves were landed and forwarded to Jaalan.

Twelve miles west of Sherkh is the fishing village of the Al-Waheebeh Bedouins. Ras Ashreen, or Shaiballa, is a low rocky point with a hamlet of the Al-Waheebeh some distance from the beach.

The aspect of the shore now changes, the land sinking nearly to the level of the sea, and we find from this point westward a series of round, white sandhills, about 100 feet high, stretching away inland. Fifteen miles to the south-west is Ras Kileet, the Shaima of the pilot, and further on is Ras Mohammed bin Majid.

Ras Kileet forms the northern entrance to the dangerous Maseera Channel, which separates that island from the mainland, the southern entrance being at Ras Um al-Shew, or Mishsiyh, thirty-four miles distant, while three miles south of Ras Kileet is a small woody island known as Jezeera Maawal. Opposite Maseera the mainland is very low, being barely above the level of the sea, and is covered with sandhills, the sand being so fine in some places as to be almost imperceptible. The channel has an average width of ten miles and is too shallow and intricate for large vessels to venture a passage.

Maseera is the largest island but one (Socotra) in the Arabian Sea, being thirty-eight and a-half miles, with an average breadth of six miles; the extreme width is nine miles, and it is four miles at the narrowest part. The hill range forming the backbone rises to a height of 629 feet in Jebel Mughrub at the north end, and declining to about half that height at the southern part; in appearance it is nothing but a mass of dark arid rocks with sandy patches, almost destitute of cultivation, and presenting a forbidding and sterile aspect. The hills are principally metamorphic, composed

of serpentine and diorite similar to those at Jibsh and Muscat, but there is also much fossiliferous limestone. There are several worked-out lead and copper mines that were excavated in ancient times, the smelting furnaces of which can still be seen. The inhabitants number about 1,000 and belong to the Jenebeh tribe, occupying four villages and two or three hamlets, Um Rasas, Safaiz, above which is an old watch-tower, Hakkim, and Dawa, the largest with a date grove, some cultivation, and a population of 500; it is here that the Shaikh of the island resides. The natives of the island are chiefly employed in fishing and in rearing a breed of semi-wild asses, which are disposed of at Soor and other towns; though not large, these animals are very hardy and serviceable, of great endurance, but are frequently found to be very vicious.

Hamilton remarks: "That the natives of this coast seem to be sorcerers, for in the year 1684 a ship from London called the *Merchant's Delight*, commanded by Captain Edward Say, went ashore on Maseera Island. The vessel stuck fast on the rocks, and in the morning the crew saw an encampment of Arabs quite near them. The Arabs swam to the ship and brought the end of a rope ashore, inviting the sailors to come to land and make terms. An arrangement was then made that the cargo and ship's gear should be equally divided between the Arabs and English, and that the latter with their share should be safely transported to Muscat. The English were hospitably treated and the whole bargain was most faithfully carried out by the Arabs. The explanation as given to the interpreter at the time was as follows. About eight days before the wreck a fakir had prophesied that a ship would be cast ashore there and had urged the people to assemble at that spot to assist the mariners and give them half the salvage. The prophecy of the fakir had come true and his injunctions had been scrupulously obeyed."

To the south of the island is the Gulf of Maseera, which is known to the Arabs of Oman as Bahr al-Hadri, or the "Lower Sea." At the top of this is Ghubbet Hashish, or "Grass Bay," a small shallow bay with three islets, Mahot, Rig, and Abana. The bay derives its name from the long coarse grass, which grows abundantly in the

vicinity. About two miles north-east of Mahot is a creek, which forms the debouchment of the wadis draining the southern slope of the Jebel Akhdar range. These wadis are the Kalbuh, Andan, Ethli, and Halfam, all of which, converging into the last mentioned, pour their waters into this creek in flood time.

Between Ghubbet Hashish and Maseera Channel is a peninsula called Bahr al-Hikman, the south-western point of which is Ras Zeiwani and the south-eastern is Ras Um al-Shew ; near the former point is Khor Milh, a salt lagoon, from which large quantities of salt are exported to Zanzibar.

The island of Mahot, the chief trading station on this part of the coast, is low and sandy without a vestige of vegetation except mangrove bushes, which fringe it two-thirds round ; the landing-place is on the north-east side, but is concealed from view by these bushes. There are no stone houses, and the huts, about 150 in number, are generally oval or circular in shape, made of mangrove boughs bound with ghadaf rope, and contain, perhaps, 400 to 500 inhabitants. The water found on the island is very brackish, and potable water has to be brought from wells four miles distant, and for this purpose female slaves are employed, who bring it in skins or in large earthen vessels suspended in goat's hair cloths, slung on poles ; there is a storage of water in casks, for the use of the community, under a shed in the village.

The rise and fall of the tide at Mahot is considerable, being about eight or nine feet. The island is occupied conjointly by the Jenebeh and Hikman tribes, but other tribes, such as the Amiri and Al-Waheebeh are also represented. To the eastward the Hikman extend as far as Kais Mohammed bin Majid, own part of the district of Yuba, and roam the desert with their camels and goats ; in number they are about 3,500 souls, being a poor, wild, vagrant, and predacious set, while to the westward of Ghubbet Hashish are the Al-Waheebeh, who dwell as far as Hamar al-Nafoor.

Notwithstanding its insignificant appearance Mahot is a thriving and busy trading place and the people are well-to-do, the women being loaded with silver ornaments. It has the advantage not

only of being the sole trading port between Ras al-Had and Dhofar, but also of being the nearest point on the coast to Zanzibar ; also it is a free port. The town in the interior with which traffic is mainly carried on is Adam, which is 128 miles distant, caravans taking five or more days, there being thirty or more places at which water and fodder are procurable. Mahot has also trading relations to a much smaller extent with Zikki and Jaalan, while the traffic in slaves has now almost entirely ceased.

In the palmy days of the slave trade Mahot was more populous and flourishing than it is now, as it formed a secure and convenient haven for landing cargoes of slaves, which were then pushed up to Adam, Nezwa, Zikki, and other places inland. The negroes were brought from Zanzibar in batches of ten to twenty in small coasting craft, during the south-west monsoon, and as Mahot was little known to, and unwatched by, the cruisers, captures were but rarely made. Of the four slave-landing stations on this part of the coast, Mahot ranked next to Soor, the others being Al-Askhara and Shihr.

The imports are rice, corn, cloth, pottery, and other requirements of Arab life. The exports are dates, shark fins (sent to Bombay for export to China), fish sounds, or isinglass, commonly known as fish maws, tortoiseshell, from the Hamoon or Hawks bill turtle, *Turtur Imbricata*, salt, and salt fish ; the chief kinds cured being the kunud or seer fish and the shook, or horse mackerel, caranx species.

On September 21st, 1835, the United States Sloop *Peacock*, carrying Mr. Roberts, the Envoy to Muscat, struck on a coral reef near Mahot, but was hauled off, after jettisoning half her guns (she had run over forty miles of soundings before she grounded) much to the disappointment of the Arabs who had assembled on the shore in numbers in anticipation of the *Peacock* becoming a total wreck.

In November, 1883, H.M.S. *Philomel*, on her way to Dhofar, visited Mahot and anchored there for two days.

Continuing along the coast from Ghubbet Hashish, the western point of which is Ras Abana, we come to Ghubbet and Ras Bintot, nine miles inland of which is Jebel Sherbateen, 480 feet high, while

beyond Ras Bintot are Ghubbet and Beni Surab, the latter being twenty-eight miles from Ras Abana. At Ras Surab, we are informed by Carter, the limestone rock emerges from beneath the sandhills, being partly magnesian and heavy and of a grey colour.

Ten miles further west is a small point known as Ras Arkeet, and four miles from this is Ras Nakhreir, a bold point 465 feet high, the cliff here and for some distance being steep down to the water. We then come to Ras Sedeera, and further on to Sereer, a hamlet of the Al-Waheebeh.

Opposite to this and about four miles out to sea is the island of Hamar al-Nafoor, 320 feet high and 1,200 feet long, which is frequented by myriads of gulls and gannets and is covered with a thin deposit of guano. Of this island Carter remarks that the specimens from it are most interesting and important; its summit, though flat, he adds, is split in all directions, and is composed of nummulitic white limestone and flints 150 feet deep, underneath which is a fossiliferous calcareous deposit, below which again is a greenish white clay.

Between Ras Sedeera and Ras Kowairat, a distance of fifteen miles, is Ghubbet Kowairat. After Ras Kowairat we find a line of high steep cliffs extending nearly to Ras Madraka; the headlands met with being Ras Metah, Ras Kaisat al-Yokh, Ras al-Aanee, Al-Arek, Ras Merkaz, and Ras al-Dala.

The Arabs occupying the shore on this part of Arabia are sometimes at feud with the large Bedouin clans, roaming and rearing camels in the great desert, and are a poor inoffensive folk, not only few in number but are lightly fed, clothed and armed. A few scattered hamlets may be seen, but the families mostly dwell in the open air, sheltering under small goatshair tents, among the long grass or under acacia trees. There is said to be no attempt at cultivation, and they are dependent on their fisheries and on their flocks for subsistence, their food consisting of fish, milk and dates, rice and bread rarely falling to their lot. Possessing but very few boats in fishing they generally make use of the girba or inflated goat's skin, while sharks are caught in nets or by the hook with a piece of

iron chain attached, and the shark, when drawn up close, is stunned with an iron club ; it is, perhaps, the most valuable fish caught by them, the fins and tail, also the liver and skin, are all made use of, while the flesh is largely eaten.

At Ras Madraka, which is forty miles from Ras Kowairat and 100 miles from Ghubbet Hashish, and forms the western extremity of the Gulf of Maseera, the coast turns abruptly to the west. Ras Madraka is better known to the Arabs as Ras Jezeera, of which word the appellation, viz., Cape Isoletta, formerly given to it by the Portuguese, is a translation. It is a dark headland with an islet off it, and stands 480 feet high, being regarded by all navigators as a notable landmark. On the north side is a spring of perfectly sweet water and another spring is found in the chine or cleft between Madraka and Dula, which is six miles distant. Ras Madraka is the eastern point of a curious triple cape, nine miles in length, the other two points being Takeh Abuk, 333 feet high, believed by the Arabs to be artificial and to have been visited by Abuk al-Makkarme al-Janabi, who resided in a cave close by. It is, however, quite natural and is due to Plutonic upheaval, having a very singular appearance, being white, and standing on an extensive platform ; viewed from the north, it has the semblance of a mosque with a white dome or cupola. The geological structure of this promontory is extraordinary, Carter says that an eruption of igneous rocks has taken place and that the cape presents as complete a picture of such a disturbance as can well be witnessed. The continuity of the cliff, which on either side is uniform and horizontal, is here entirely broken up by igneous rocks, and detached portions of its strata thrown into all kinds of positions and weathered into all kinds of shapes.

Between Ras Khashaeem, a perpendicular bluff forming the western point of the cape, and Takeh Abuk is a small bay with a sandy beach called Bundar Jezeera, where a few fishermen, engaged in shark fishing, reside.

To the west of Khashaeem is Ghubbet Saukira, the largest bay on this coast, sixty-four miles in length as the crow flies, and here

the limestone formation found at Hamar al-Nafoor and other places again recurs. In the bay are a few places where water is found and where the fishermen have erected huts to cure their fish, the names of two of these places being Gediasa and Ghasaib, and it was at the latter place, which lies at the mouth of the Wady Einana, that the crew of the S.S. *Knight of Bath* landed in their boat and were stripped by some wandering Awamir, who are always watching the coast and espied them, and where soon after they were fed and succoured by an Arab fisherman named Suliman in 1884. The Wady Einana rises in the hills to the north-east of Saukira and is, of course, only a torrent bed, but water is, as usual, generally found by digging; it is marked in one of Captain Owen's charts. One of these peaks on the tableland at the back of the bay is called Jebel Harzait, and this may be the Funnel, or Tower Hill, of the chart; the tribes inhabiting this part are the Awamir, Jenebeh, and Al-Waheebeh.

There is a singular coral reef in Saukira Bay, twenty miles long and fifteen miles wide, known as Rug al-Jazir, which forms a famous landmark for coasters, and has given its name to the whole bay among the Arabs. This reef is considered very dangerous by Arab navigators, who avoid it as much as possible, and in the south-west monsoon no native craft are to be seen along it, as it is then a dead lee shore with the surf breaking heavily on it. Haines remarks, "I had much trouble in surveying the miserable tract of coast between Saukira and Kashain, as during the north-east monsoon I experienced at all times a very heavy swell, the vessel rolling her scuppers under with a whole cable on end, and top-gallant masts on deck. Notwithstanding the weather, the vessel, tender and boats, by the resolute perseverance of my officers, accomplished this part of the survey, with about 5,000 miles of cross soundings in less than two months." Ras Saukira, which is 622 feet high, is a projecting rock composed of a horizontal strata of limestone with chalk and flint below. This cape, which is claimed by the Jenebeh, is called Cape Chansley in Milburn's "Directory."

Between Ras Saukira and Ras Sherbetat, twenty-five miles distant, the coast presents a level well scarped cliff, with an average

height of 600 feet the whole way. Ras Sherbetat forms, with Ras Karwaw and Ras Aja, an irregular triple headland two miles wide at the east end of Kooria Mooria Bay, has a very precipitous front, and is, like Karwaw, honeycombed with caves, some of which are very large and have been excavated by the sea, in the same way as those at the Bill of Portland, the caves being much frequented by Bedouins ; the altitude is 800 feet, the coast, at this point, having gradually risen in elevation from Ghubbet Hashish. At the crest of the eminence at Ras Aja, by which name the western point of Ras Karwaw is known, the Arabs have erected a small parapet of rough stones, from which they scan the horizon and watch for vessels. Near this is the Wady Gozalet, which does not debouch into the sea, but terminates in a long narrow lake of serpentine form, lying in a natural fissure or cleft in the rock and is called Lokook. The water is slightly brackish at the lower end, but is full of fish and is much resorted to by waterfowl such as cormorants, heron and duck. In the cold season the Jenebeh visit this place with their families, but dare not venture inland from fear of their old enemies, the Al-Waheebeh, while Arab vessels often take shelter under the western side of Ras Karwaw, the haven being known as Bundar Sherbetat, which is two miles to the east.

In some of the lists of place-names furnished by local Shaikhs to me, Sherbetat and Karwaw are transposed, the latter name being given to the eastern point, and there is thus some reason for supposing that the two names have become changed in modern times.

The interior, behind the north shore of Kooria Mooria Bay, is reported to be an undulating plain with abundance of the usual desert vegetation and not devoid of water, forming a wild and undefined border land, where scattered bands of the Omani tribes from the east and the Mahras from the west, meet and mingle together. This part of the Roba al-Khali, or great desert, being, as is well known, where the finest breed of the dromedaries in existence is reared. There are no settled habitations, the Bedouins being nomadic and moving hither and thither for convenience of pasture. The wild animals are the Oryx Beatrix, the wild ass, the hare, and two species of gazelle.

Thirteen miles to the east of Ras Aja is Minji, about 700 feet above the sea, with a small lake of fresh water under it; the cliffs between these points receding somewhat from the sea.

After another bay of twelve miles in length, backed by high cliffs, we come to Ras Showamkya, meaning the "Gloomy Cape," which forms the eastern point of a remarkable headland eleven miles long and the western point of which is Ras Jezaniya. This broad projecting cape, the average height of which is 500 feet, is generally known as Jebel Showamira, exhibits a singular eruption of igneous rocks and offers a marked contrast to the light coloured sedimentary strata to the eastward. Carter remarks that it is the eastern limit of the elevated tract of South Arabia and the western limit of the lowland or desert of Ahkaf. Ras Jezaniya is not only noticeable for its geological formation but as a boundary, beyond which the Jenebeh do not venture westward. From Ras Jezaniya, a low curved sandy bay extends westwards about twenty-five miles to Ras Montejeb, a rugged peak with a tableland in the background; it stands near the embouchure of the Wady Rekot and to the north of Ghubbet Doom, at the north-west corner of Kooria Mooria Bay.

Kooria Mooria.

These islands are a group of five isolated conical peaks, extending thirty-five miles in the same parallel as, and to the eastward of, Haski, and are the tops of a mountain range now submerged and at the southward barrier of the Kooria Mooria Bay, from the northern shore of which they are distant twenty-five miles.

Haski, the most westerly of the group, is 500 feet high and is more than a mile in length, and was formerly thickly covered with guano which has since been removed.

Soda, or the Black Island, is the second largest, being three miles long and 1,310 feet in height; it was once inhabited but has long since been deserted.

The third island, Hellaniya, is the largest of the group and the only inhabited one, being eight miles long and twenty-three in cir-

cumference, and contained, in 1884, thirty-four inhabitants, all Mahras. This island is very barren and is composed, like Haski and Soda, mainly of the metamorphic rocks, granite mingled with quartz, horneblende, felspar, etc. The formation of the north-east end is a huge tabular mass of limestone and sedimentary rocks rising to an elevation of 1,645 feet. Water is found everywhere near the surface but is rather brackish.

The valuable guano deposits on two of these islands, Haski and Kiblia, were discovered during the nautical survey of this coast in 1835, and some years later Captain Fremantle, R.N., of H.M.S. *Juno*, was instructed to negotiate for the acquisition of these islands with the Sultan of Muscat. H.H. Seyyid Saeed, while declining to sell the islands, presented them in free gift to the British Government, and a treaty to that effect was signed on July 14th, 1854. A partner of the firm of Ord, Hendson, and Hayes was associated with Captain Fremantle in the transfer, and subsequently obtained a lease of the islands for five years. On Kiblia the guano was deposited from one to six feet thick with an average depth of two feet, and the total quantity on both islands was estimated at 200,000 tons. Between the years 1855 and 1860, by which time the whole of the guano had been cleared off, the Kooria Mooria Islands presented a busy scene, as many as fifty-two ships having been seen there at one time.

In 1861 the cable of the Red Sea and Karachi Telegraph Company was landed at Hellaniya, and a station was formed on that island, but was abandoned in 1862 on the failure of the cable. The European pirates, who infested the Indian Ocean in the early part of the eighteenth century, were only precluded from occupying this island by the absence of a good supply of fresh water; they would otherwise have chosen it as an excellent station for watching and intercepting the rich trade carried on between India and the Red Sea.

Among the Arabs these islands bear the appellation of "Jezair Beni Khalfan," but to Europeans they are better known by the name given them by the old Arabian geographers, namely, Kooria Mooria, or, according to some, Khartan Martan. As regards the Beni Khalfan,

Hulton relates that the head of the Beni Khalfan family, a Shaikh named Said bin Omar bin Khalfan, having amassed considerable wealth, collected numerous adherents and made a vigorous attempt to possess himself of the Government of Merbat, but having failed in this he retired to Hellaniya ; later on he returned to Howeeya, near Merbat, but reserved the possession of all the islands. His descendants occasionally visit the islands to exact tribute, and their right seemed to be acquiesced in by all the tribes in that part. The population of the island was greatly reduced, it is said, in 1818, when it was visited by a squadron of piratical dhows from Ras al-Khyma ; the huts were ransacked and plundered, and many of the people were killed by the pirates, and women and children carried off as slaves.

The fourth island, Kiblia, is twelve miles from Hellaniya and is a limestone peak, 550 feet high and two miles in length by one mile in breadth. This island has several deep caves and had on it a thick coating of guano, and during the removal of the guano the Company's agent, Mr. McCalmont, resided on the island and had a guardship of the Indian Nayy anchored near as a protection.

The smallest of the group is Kurzooait, a red granite peak 230 feet in height, called by the Portuguese navigators " Rodondo," which lies about half-way between Hellaniya and Kiblia.

CHAPTER X.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF DHOFAR. DHOFAR AND BERAIMI DESCRIBED.

History of Dhofar.

The little district of Dhofar possesses many claims to engage our attention, and though its ancient history and tradition have passed away for ever, some interest attaches to it from the allusion to it in scripture as the eastern limit of the Joltanite race, and the great celebrity it had acquired from its being one of the sources of the olibanum or frankincense gum, which had been exported hence from very remote antiquity to all parts of the known world.

In the tenth chapter of Genesis we are given the divisions of the great Arab race under the names of the sons of Shem. One of these sons, Joktan, occupied the south-west corner of the Arabian peninsula, and out of the thirteen children enumerated as having sprung from him, many can, more or less, satisfactorily be identified. " Their dwelling," we are told, in verse 30, " was from Mesha as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the East."

The name and description of Dhofar, which lies to the east of Hadhramaut, coincides with those of Sephar as given in the Bible with such singular aptness that the identification has been generally accepted as beyond dispute.

The Alexandrian Codex in the British Museum is said to give the name more correctly as Sophar, being thus more in accord with the Arabic Dhofar.

Long anterior, however, to this period referred to in the Bible, the chief product of Dhofar was mentioned in the ancient records

of Egypt, by which we may infer that Dhofar was a thriving port and emporium at a very remote period, and that, as Sprenger suggests, olibanum was the *fons et origo* of commercial intercourse.

The geographical writers of Greece and Rome, Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny, the Periplus, Diodorus, Ptolemy, etc., give some information about the libanoferous region, and tell us extraordinary stories of the fabulous beings that guard the frankincense trees there. The gum was one of the most highly prized and valued products of the vegetable kingdom. Indeed the region of which Dhofar formed part was surrounded with a halo of mystery and fable. It was in great demand, in those ages, for use in idolatrous temples, and was carried by sea to all parts of the world, north, east and west.

The latest of the Classic authors was coeval with the rise of the Himyarite Kingdom of South Arabia, which, having the power, did not scruple to annex the district of Dhofar, and with it the monopoly of the lucrative frankincense trade; it was, however, too remote from the Himyarite centres to have ever been, as some have supposed, the capital of that kingdom. The Dhofar referred to by Arab writers as the Seat of Government and residence of the Tobbas was near Sanna, and is one of the places of which the ruins are described by Niebuhr.

Several Arab geographer sbesides Abul Feda have confounded one Dhofar with another, and have given inaccurate accounts of them, but we know for certain there were two cities of the same name, one known as Dhofar al-Zaid and the other as Dhofar al-Sahil, the latter being the one we are now speaking of. The former came to an end with the Himyarite dynasty in the sixth century of our era, shortly before the rise of Mohammed, its existence probably not having exceeded half a dozen centuries; while Dhofar al-Sahil, on the other hand, continued to flourish, as it had done for thousands of years as a thriving and populous seaport; but the ancient history of it has faded into oblivion, and it was only after the spread of Islam over the peninsula that the light began to dawn on this little province, and even then the rays thrown on it are but feeble,

transient, and intermittent, and it is only possible to give a mere outline of historical events.

Two years after the death of Mohammed, the avenging army despatched by Abu Bekr, under the command of Ikrima, to re-establish the Faith discarded by the insurgents in the revolted provinces, arrived at Dhofar from Oman, where he had routed the Christian and Pagan army of Lakeet on the famous field of Dibba.

Leaving Hadhaifa to subdue and pacify Oman, Ikrima pushed on to Dhofar across the intervening desert, and soon re-established the Moslem faith among the Mahra and Azdite tribes in that district, from whence he marched on to Hadhramaut to restore order and obedience, after the achievement of which he appointed Saeed bin Lebeed as Governor of that province.

During the next two centuries the Moslem religion took firm root in Western Asia and the Khalifs widely extended their Empire.

The Governor of the Yemen, Abbas bin Saeed ibn al-As, had been succeeded by Jalia ibn Ali Omair, who in 35 A.H. [A.D. 655] was dismissed by the Khalif and a new Governor, Abdulla bin Abbas, sent in his place.

On the overthrow of the Omayyad Dynasty in 132 A.H. [A.D. 749] the Abasside general who subdued the Yemen, Mohammed Abu ibn Mohammed, appointed Mohammed bin Zaid governor of the province, and it is possible that Hadhramaut and Dhofar were included within the jurisdiction.

At the beginning of the third century of the Hijrah, Mohammed ibn Ziyad, who had been concerned in one of the rebellions against the Khalif Mamoon ibn Haroon soon after his accession, 198 A.H. [A.D. 813], and who had been pardoned by the Khalif's clemency, was appointed Ameer of the Yemen in 204 A.H. [A.D. 819]. Having conquered the Tehama, he built the city of Zebeed and made it the capital of his dynasty. With a vigorous hand he extended his dominions and reduced Hadhramaut, Dhofar, and other provinces to submission, appointing as his governors officials of his own selection.

Shortly after the acquisition of Dhofar bv Mohammed ibn

Ziyad, the Hindoo Raja of Cranganore, Chereman Perimal, generally known to the Arabs as Abdul Rahman al-Samiri, arrived at this port, where he resided until his death, as mentioned elsewhere.

The Beni Ziyad Dynasty was not destined to be of long duration as it would appear that in the time of Abu Jehrish, the grandson of Mohammed ibn Ziyad, several provinces, including Dhofar, revolted from his authority, and that in the year 297 A.H. [A.D. 909] the Carmathians of the Yemen had extended their conquests over the whole country.

But it may be observed that Al-Istakhri, who travelled in the early part of the fourth century of the Hijrah, considered Dhofar to be a dependency of Oman.

In the "Sifat al-Jezeerat al-Arab," of Ahmed bin Yusuf al Hamdani, who died 334 A.H. [A.D. 945] is given some notice of the tribes in this district, which has been pointed out by Dr. Sprenger, and of which some portion may be here inserted.

> "The people who dwell below Al-Kamar were the Beni Khanzareet, who expelled the inhabitants of Raysoot, who then retired to Al-Gheith belonging to the Mahras, and occupied the towns of Hasek and Merbat for some time. The Thoghara tribe subsequently induced them to retake Raysoot and drive the Khanzareet away. The Khanzareet Chief, Mohammed bin Khalid, with his tribe then went to Al-Radha of the Beni Ryam, a branch of the Kamr, and resided there. The Beni Ryam have an impregnable fortress in Oman. The oldest inhabitants of Raysoot were the Baiyasireh, near whom the Azdite tribe Hadeed settled. The Hadeed were overpowered by some Arab tribe who had intermarried with the Mahras, and the man who ruled after that was Moosa bin Rabeea of the Al-Udar."

In the middle of the fourth century of the Hijrah, and for some centuries previously, under various successive dynasties, of which we know nothing certain, the capital of the Dhofar district appears

to have been a city called Merbat situated at the eastern end of the plain near the present village of Thaka, where the ruins of a once large and populous town still exist. Merbat, which signifies the place for mooring vessels, and is mentioned by nearly all the early Arab geographers, lies about twenty miles north of the present village of Merbat, which formed perhaps a sort of outer anchorage in the north-east monsoon.

The old city had an abundant supply of sweet water from the hills above, and there were three tidal creeks, all of which probably formed anchorages or moorings for Arab craft, and have been described by Haines, Carter, and Bent ; the most capacious of which, called Rairi, extends up about two miles.

The old city of Merbat, which had been for so many centuries the chief port and emporium of the frankincense trade, came to a sudden termination in the middle or close of the fourth century of the Hijrah, when the founders of the Minjui Dynasty appeared on the scene, who took possession of Merbat, which they occupied for some time, and subsequently destroyed it and transferred the capital to the banks of a creek about twenty miles to the west. Here, possibly on the site of a more ancient town, they built a city, the plan and ornamental remains of which are known now as Al-Balad and have been described in detail by Carter.

Ibn Mojawir tells us that Merbat was built by the Persians, the last dynasty there being that of the Minjuis ; in this statement he must refer, of course, to Al-Balad, the designs and architecture of which are unquestionably Persian. It indicates, also, that the Minjuis transferred the name as well as the site of their capital and gave the new city the appellation of Merbat.

The origin of the Minjuis, the events of their rule, whence they came, and whither they went, are matters of conjecture, as Arab writers have little to say about them. Carter heard that the family came from Balkh, and he observes that this remarkable dynasty has impressed itself deeply on the minds of the inhabitants, to the exclusion, in fact, of most others, and it is to the Minjuis that the numerous heaps of ruins scattered over the plain and indicating

the sites of former towns are usually ascribed, and it is curious that so little mention has been made of this family; they may have come from Siraf, Busra, or Kilhat, but whether it originated in the expatriation of some Persian grandee, owing to religious or political persecutions, an occurrence by no means infrequent in the early centuries of Islam, is uncertain.

From the "Kamil" of Ibn al-Atheer, who gives more information about Dhofar than most writers, we learn that in 490 A.H. [A.D. 1096] Rashid bin Ahmed bin Abda, who we may take it was the Minjui King, died in Dhofar, and that in 510 A.H. [A.D. 1116] the Kamar tribe came on a mission to Abdulla bin Rashid, asking help from the people of Dhofar, which was accorded.

Idrisi tells us that in 540 A.H. [A.D. 1145] the ruler of Dhofar was Ahmed al-Manjuwiya, and that it was at this time a dependency of Oman.

Five years later the town of Merbat would appear to have been pillaged by a piratical expedition from the island of Kais in the Persian Gulf, on its way to attack Aden.

In 597 A.H. [A.D. 1200] the troops of Hadhramaut advanced on Dhofar and besieged it for fifty days, but were repulsed.

In 599 A.H. [A.D. 1202] Hayoob was slain in Dhofar, the Governor of which, according to Carter, named Mohammed bin Mohammed, claimed to be the son of Manjuwiya who was murdered in 604 A.H. [A.D. 1207]. Hayoob may possibly have been the Minju prince who befriended Al-Haboodhi, when the latter was a merchant and was put to death by Al-Haboodhi, who usurped the throne in 604 A.H. [A.D. 1207]. This adventurer, who founded the next dynasty, was by name Ahmed bin Mahmood al-Himyari al-Haboodhi, and a native of Hadhramaut, began life as a trader, becoming a rich merchant and shipowner. We are told that he was a descendant of Modhar and was a learned man. We are told also something of his adventures, how when his ship was wrecked he was given another by the Minjui prince of Dhofar, and received another ship from the ruler of Aden, Saif bin Islam. We have interesting accounts of him in the pages of Ibn Khaldoon, Ibn al-Atheer, and Ibn al-Mojawir,

from whom we learn how he displayed his talents by becoming Wazeer and ultimately seizing power when the last of the Minjuis was put out of the way.

It is asserted by several Arab writers that Al-Haboodhi built a new capital, which he began in 618 A.H. [A.D. 1221] and completed in three years. He called it after his own name, Ahmediyya, his ostensible motive for this action being that the old capital was too far from the sea and that its distance from the shipping was disadvantageous. This story, although apparently so circumstantial, is quite erroneous. Al-Haboodhi, though he resided in it, was certainly not the founder of the new Merbat. It had been built by the Minjuis two centuries previously and was located close to the sea, with the advantages of a deep creek suitable for the entrance of ships. As an Arab, Haboodhi was quite incapable of erecting a city like Merbat, or, as it is now styled, Al-Balad. The ornate architecture of the buildings, the skilful designs and construction of the town, the exquisite taste of the sculptures are unlike anything to be found in Arabia and prove that the founders of the city were a cultured and civilized race.

Of the events of this reign we know but little. Ibn Mojawir relates that in 616 A.H. [A.D. 1219] some Nejdian Bedouins from Yemama came to Dhofar, across the desert, with horses for sale and were received by Al-Haboodhi with hospitality and kindness. These Bedouins returned home by the way they had come, but it does not appear that they ever repeated their visit. The Haboodhi Dynasty, for some reasons unknown, remained in abeyance after his death in 625 A.H. [A.D. 1227], and the power was wielded by others, but later on his descendants came forward to claim their heritage.

He was followed as ruler by Mohammed bin Ali bin al-Hassan al-Kallai, who took his cognomen from the Fort of Aleppo; this man died in 630 A.H. [A.D. 1232] and was buried at Robat. His successor appears to have been one of the Minjui family, Abu Bekr bin Mohammed bin Amr al-Hazaz, who was killed in the year 652 A.H. [A.D. 1254]. Abu Bekr left two sons, Mohammed and Abdul Rahman, for whom Ahmed bin Ali al-Dhofari became regent.

In 656 A.H. [A.D. 1258] Baghdad was captured by the Turks, and the Arab Empire, known as the Eastern Khalifate, was overthrown, but the effect was little felt at this remote part of Arabia, where the Central Government had never been much accustomed to interfere.

In the following year, 657 A.H. [A.D. 1258], or, according to Ross 660 A.H. [A.D. 1261], the Lord of Hormuz, Rukn al-Deen Mahmood bin Ahmed al-Kashi, who was pursuing an ambitious military career, took an expedition to Kilhat, from whence he proceeded to Dhofar, where, after plundering and ravaging the coast, he was driven off by Mohammed Abu Bekr, according to the fragment of a local chronicle procured at Dhofar. The expedition, however, on its return journey appears to have met with disaster, being reduced to extremities by hunger and thirst, and losing, it is said, 5,000 of their number.

A few years later Merbat, or Ahmediyya, was recovered and occupied by Salim bin Idris al-Haboodhi, who came from Hadhramaut with a force and took possession. This event probably took place about the year 670 A.H. [A.D. 1271]; at this period the Rasooli Dynasty was ruling in the Yemen, and the king, Malik Madhaffar, was engaged in extending his dominions over the adjacent provinces and consolidating his power.

We are informed by Al-Khuzraji, the historian of the Rasoolites, whose work has been recently translated by Redhouse, that the pretext for this aggression on, and conquest of Dhofar, occurred in the following way. A great famine having befallen Hadhramaut the lord of that country had recourse to Salim bin Idris, and in return for his help he surrendered to him the fort of Shibam and other castles, by the taking of which Salim bin Idris imagined he had secured the suzerainty of that land. The people, however, proved treacherous and repossessed themselves of Shibam, and Salim bin Idris found himself suddenly deprived of what he had looked on as his own. It so happened about this time that Malik Madhaffar, the second king of the Rasooli Dynasty, had despatched an envoy to Persia, and the vessel in which the envoy was travelling

had been wrecked off Dhofar. Salim the Haboodhite, viewing this mishap as a Deodand, unscrupulously robbed the envoy of all the valuable presents he was carrying to the Shah of Persia, as some compensation for what he had lost in Hadhramaut. For this outrage Salim the Haboodhite was called to account by the Rasooli prince, but as no redress could be obtained, the Sultan or Ameer of Aden, Shahab al-Deen Ghazil, was directed to send a naval armament against Dhofar, to enforce restitution of the envoy's baggage, but the Ameer of Aden's flotilla, on reaching its destination, was worsted in the encounter and pursued back to Aden by Salim bin Idris. The Rasooli King of the Yemen, incensed at this reverse, projected an expedition which moved on to Dhofar in three divisions, two by land and one by sea. A great battle was fought on the plain near the village of Owkad, not far from Raysoot, in which Salim bin Idris with about 300 men were slain and 800 prisoners taken.

On the 28th of Rajab, 677 A.H. [A.D. 1278], the day after the battle, the town of Merbat, or Ahmediyya, was occupied by the Yemen troops in the name of Malik Madhaffar. The Ameer, Shams al-Deen, who commanded the expedition, sent the survivors of the Haboodhi family to Zebeed and placed a deputy governor in charge of the district. On the news of this conquest being spread abroad, many princes sent congratulations and presents to the Ameer, among them being the Lord of Oman, Kahtan bin Omar al-Nebhani, who sent two horses and two golden eagles.

The local annalist gives a somewhat different version of the invasion. He tells us that the famine in Hadhramaut, the remote cause of the war, took place in 673 A.H. [A.D. 1274], and that in the year 678 A.H. [A.D. 1279] Malik Madhaffar Yusuf bin Ali sent an army under Ibn al-Haik, while the other was despatched under the King's third son, Wathek, by sea, the two forces uniting under the walls of Mansoora or Merbat, where a battle ensued in which Salim bin Idris was killed and the suburbs entered and plundered. Moosa bin Idris, however, held out gallantly, and Wathek bin Yusuf was compelled to raise the siege and retire to Zebeed, with his booty and

captives. In the following year 679 A.H. [A.D. 1280] Malik Madhaffar sent a still stronger force to attain his object and a sanguinary contest again took place, the citadel being stormed and carried and Moosa bin Idris with the town falling into the hands of the victors. The King of the Yemen appointed his son, Wathek Billah, Vassal King of Dhofar, and the Rasooli Dynasty in this district, which now commenced, lasted about 150 years.

It was subsequent to the Rasooli conquest of Dhofar, and probably the year 684 A.H. [A.D. 1285], that the famous Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, paid a visit to Merbat or Mansoora, which he describes as follows :—

> " Dhofar is a great and noble and fine city and lies 500 miles to the north-east of Esher. The people are Saracens and have a Count for their Chief, who is subject to the Soldan of Aden, for this city still belongs to the province of Aden. It stands upon the sea and has a very good haven, so that there is a great traffic in shipping, and the merchants take hence great numbers of Arab horses to that market, making a great profit thereby. The city has under it many other towns and villages. Much white incense is produced here and I will tell you how it grows. The trees are like small fir trees, they are notched with a knife in several places and from these notches the incense is exuded. Sometimes also it flows from a tree without any notch ; that is by reason of the great heat of the sun there."

Marco Polo's account shows very clearly that Dhofar was at this time a very thriving and populous trading centre and that frankincense, the chief product of the place, was largely exported. At the present day no horses are exported from South Arabia, and the number of horses in the southern part of the peninsula is comparatively very small.

In 685 A.H. [A.D. 1286] a disastrous hurricane burst over Dhofar and caused great devastation, much cultivation was destroyed, and many people died and great loss was occasioned.

The succession of Vassal Kings of Dhofar during the Rasooli hegemony is very confused and incomplete, as even the local annalist supplies but little information on this point. He informs us, however, that the Sultan Ibrahim bin Yusuf, son of the King Al-Madhaffar, entered the city of Dhofar on Monday the last day of Dhu' l-Hijrah, 691 A.H. [A.D. 1291], and ruled over it fifteen years. It is probable that this personage is identical with Wathek, who was given the appanage of Dhofar on its conquest in 679 A.H. [A.D. 1280] by his father, Malik Madhaffar, and who is generally spoken of by Al-Khuzraji as Wathek Ibrahim, and we may assume that Wathek Ibrahim reigned about twenty-six years and died in 707 A.H. [A.D. 1307].

Wathek appears to have been succeeded by his son Ashraf, but the news reaching Moweed al-Deen, the second son of Malik Madhaffar, he raised an army at Shihr to attack Ashraf, and gain possession of Dhofar, but the results of this war are not recorded.

In 726 A.H. [A.D. 1325] there occurred another cyclone which spread great havoc over the country. This cyclone, however, is not mentioned by Ibn Batuta, who visited Dhofar in the same year 726 A.H. [A.D. 1325]. He informs us that the Sultan at the time of his visit was Nasir bin al-Malik al-Moghith. Ibn Batuta returned to Dhofar in the year 748 A.H. [A.D. 1347] and found the same Sultan in power. His account of these visits is very interesting and is therefore subjoined in translation from the French edition. It is not clear whether the Sultan Nasir was one of the Rasooli family or was a governor appointed by the vassal king. The latter probably spent most of his time in the capital of the Yemen, leaving a Wali to administer the State, and only paid it a visit occasionally to receive the revenue that had been collected.

At the close of the eighth century of the Hijrah, the Katheeris, one of the leading Hadhramaut tribes, became formidable, and under a famous warrior, Shaikh Bedr bin al-Habrali, invaded Dhofar, expelled the effete and declining Rasooli Dynasty and took possession of that luxuriant plain. The following notes of events at this period are extracted from the local chronicle above alluded to :—

In the middle of Rajab, 796 A.H. [A.D. 1393], the Prince Mohammed bin Ahmed Kara went as Wali to Shihr, in succession to Saeed bin Shamasa, and in Dhu 'l-Hijrah of the same year Shahab al-Deen Ahmed bin Amr al-Habrali was killed in Dhofar.

In the following year Prince Nasir al-Deen Mohammed bin Amr al-Tiryati al-Dhofari died in Dhofar.

In the year 798 A.H. [A.D. 1395] Al-Mukheleef and Assawakee were destroyed, and the Abyssinian Shaikh and his son were killed, the fort known by the name of Al-Hasar being taken. On the other side, Rasa and Bedr al-Shahab al-Habrali, afterwards Al-Dhofari, went with an army from Hadhramaut to Dhofar, which was captured from Al-Tiryati after a battle. Rasa returned to the country in Rabi al-Awal. In the next year, 799 A.H. [A.D. 1396] Rasa and Bedr again attacked Al-Tiryati in Dhofar and besieged it for a day and then went on to Robat, the Rasooli troops giving way before them and retiring from the district.

Nine months later, that is in Ramzan of the same year, the Rasooli Governor, Shahab Ahmed bin al-Tiryati, in conjunction with Ibn Jedwan of Al-Hasar, renewed the struggle and marched down to recover possession from Bedr bin al-Habrali, who held it. The battle took place on the road, the Rasoolis being defeated with heavy loss and Ibn Jedwan with his Bedouins retreating at once to his own country.

In the following year, 800 A.H. [A.D. 1397] Mohammed bin Hakim Abu Keshir, the theologian, came from Hadhramaut to Dhofar and brought about peace there. Some time after this, however, the chronicle adds, Saeed bin Ali al-Habd attacked Shaikh Mohammed bin Abu Bekr at Robat and destroyed his family.

In the month of Showal the Rasoolites appear to have made another and, this time, a more successful attempt to recover Dhofar. We are told that Sultan al-Mujahid al-Wathek al-Dhofari entered Shihr and thence proceeded to the Yemen to collect an army, with which he marched to Dhofar and took it.

Further than this the annalist does not inform us, but we may conjecture that the triumph of the Rasoolites was brief, and that

Shaikh Bedr remained in possession of Dhofar. The Shaikh Bedr, who is usually spoken of by the Katheeris as Bedr-ba-Towarek, is said to have been Muccadum of Seyoon. He became Lord of Hadhramaut and Dhofar and extended his conquests as far east as Ras Sherbetat. It must be observed that Carter makes no mention of Bedr, but was informed that the founder of the Katheeri Dynasty was Ali bin Omar al-Katheeri. Subsequently the Katheeris appear to have been overpowered by others, but ultimately regained supremacy, which they have maintained throughout the vicissitudes of successive years to the present day.

On an elaborately carved marble tombstone in the cemetery at Robat is an inscription to the memory of Malik al-Fatteh Abdul Kadir bin Abdul Wahid bin Wathek Ibrahim bin al-Madhaffar Amr bin Ali. The stone is in excellent preservation but the date is very indistinct. This Abdul Kadir, grandson of Wathek, was probably at one time ruler of Dhofar.

The last prince of the Rasooli Dynasty in the Yemen was Al-Madhaffar Yusuf bin Mansoor, who moved his capital, Sanaa, to Taiz and died about 850 A.H. [A.D. 1446].

Half a century later the Portuguese, having rounded the Cape of Good Hope, appeared in the Indian Ocean, and grasping the dominion of the sea, soon made their presence felt along the Arab coast.

In 913 A.H. [A.D. 1507] the great conquistador Affonso D'Albuquerque, having received his quota of ships from Tristan da Cunha, cruised off the Kooria Mooria Islands, on his way to Muscat and Hormuz, and six years later passed Dhofar on his way to attack Aden, but does not appear to have paid any attention to it.

In 933 A.H. [A.D. 1526] the Viceroy of Goa sent a squadron to harass the Moors in the Red Sea, under the command of Hector da Silveira, who on his way anchored off Merbat, or Mansoora, and assaulted it, but the attack failed and the assailants were driven off. Da Silveira, however, was able to pillage the town before he sailed away.

Some years later, in 1539, Suliman Pasha, on his return from his

unsuccessful expedition against Diu, anchored off Mocha, captured the city of Zebeed and laid the foundations of Turkish rule in the Yemen, which as far east as Dhofar fell under the sway of Suliman the Magnificent, who appointed as his first ruler Mustafa Beg. As regards Dhofar there was probably no interference beyond the exaction of tribute.

In A.D. 1553 another and more desperate effort was made by the Portuguese to subdue Dhofar, but the result this time was unequivocal disaster to their arms.

The Viceroy of Goa, Affonso da Noronha, had sent his son Fernandes with a fleet to ravage Moorish trade in the Red Sea, and the youthful commander determined to test his newly-fledged wings at Dhofar. The Arabs defended their city with great valour and the Portuguese attack was followed by complete discomfiture. A hasty retreat was made to the ships and many dead were left on the field. On his way back from the Red Sea to India, however, Dom Fernandes had the satisfaction of encountering a Turkish fleet, commanded by Ali Beg, near Muscat and captured six out of the fifteen ships of which it was composed.

For a century and a half we hear little or nothing of the affairs of Dhofar, and whether the province became subject to the Yemen or Oman, or remained independent, is uncertain.

In 1692, Dhofar was visited by Ovington, who describes it as a place of considerable trade on this coast; he does not give the name of the ruler, but states that the people are constantly at war with Shihr and Kisheen. Ovington found the people inhospitable and villainous to strangers, and adds that the country produced olibanum, coconuts, and butter.

Some time later Captain Hamilton, the author of the *New Account of the East Indies,* narrates his visit to Dhofar and confirms the opinion of Ovington as to the unfriendly and treacherous attitude of the people towards foreigners, but he also fails to give any information of the political condition of the country. He tells us that in 1705 an English ship put in there to procure water and that the natives as usual flocked on board to sell provisions. They found

the crew, who only numbered six or seven, unarmed and unsuspicious, and taking advantage of this suddenly stabbed them, and then, after plundering the vessel, set fire to it and burnt it. Captain Symson, who visited the port, gives a similar account of the place and its commodities to that of Ovington.

At this period Dhofar was no doubt frequented by those "Monarchs of the Main," the English pirates, in quest of water and refreshment, but we do not hear of their having molested the inhabitants of Dhofar.

During the eighteenth century we find but few allusions to Dhofar, but at the beginning of the nineteenth we know that it had become the nest and stronghold of a notorious piratical chieftain, who committed great depredations on small craft in the Arabian and Red Seas. This freebooter, whose name was Seyyid Mohammed Akil, is said to have belonged to Mocha where he traded in conjunction with his brother, Abdul Rahman, in a bughla owned by their father. This, or another of the brothers preached at Mecca a crusade against the occupation of Egypt by the French, and afterwards led his countrymen to that land, where they joined the Mamelukes in opposing and harassing the French troops in Upper Egypt; another brother was American Agent at Mocha.

Seyyid Mohammed Akil derived much of his influence with the Arabs by being a descendant of the Prophet. He proceeded to the Mauritius and returned from thence in August, 1805, with two fine ships, *The Penguin* and *The Pigeon*, the latter being an English prize captured by the French bringing a large quantity of arms and ammunition, having been commissioned to occupy and fortify the island of Kamaran for the French. While at Kamaran, Seyyid Mohammed Akil boarded the American ship *Essex*, Captain Orme, and professing friendship, perfidiously offered to assist the *Essex* working to Loheia. This offer was accepted, and accordingly twenty men were sent on board, who seized the vessel and brought it back to Kamaran, where Captain Orme, Mr. Carter, and the whole of the crew were inhumanly massacred in cold blood and thrown overboard with the exception of the cabin

boy, whom he retained as a slave; the *Essex* was then plundered of her cargo and 120,000 dollars and scuttled. In consequence of this atrocity, and with the view, probably to prevent the occupation of Kamaran in French interests, *The Mornington* and *Ternate* cruisers were sent from India in search of Seyyid Mohammed Akil, who, however, escaped capture, but who, apprehensive of the presence of these vessels in the Red Sea, removed to Dhofar in the year 1806, of which he took possession and collected a bodyguard of 500 negroes and became a terror to his more peaceable neighbours.

After a few years he abandoned piracy and turned his attention to the agricultural and commercial improvement of the district, but it may be surmised that he changed his pursuits with reluctance, and that he was actuated, not so much by the prickings of a tender conscience as by the fear inspired by the action of the Indian Government, in sending an expedition to destroy Ras al-Khyma and root out other eagles' nests in the Persian Gulf in 1809.

Subsequently Mohammed Akil increased his bodyguard to 1,000 men, annexed the village of Merbat and built a fort there, and also overcame the Garas, who learned to dread him and ever remained inimical to him. Watchful for an opportunity to slay him, they contrived at length to effect their purpose. Having laid an ambush for him they shot him as he was returning one day from Merbat to Dhofar. His attendants at once took to flight, and the Garas then despatched him with their daggers. Haines tells us that he was devout and pious, and was respected by all for his mildness and impartiality, and that under his just rule trade and population increased. Mohammed Akil still has his admirers, but many stories are current at Dhofar of his bloodthirsty character, and by many he seems to have been regarded as a ruthless tyrant to the end of his days.

On hearing of the death of Mohammed Akil, the Sultan of Muscat, Seyyid Saeed, sent a force to take possession of Dhofar, in favour of Mohammed's brother, Abdul Rahman, but the latter declined the proffered honour, and returned to his native place,

Mocha. Seyyid Saeed soon after withdrew his troops from Dhofar, which has remained ever since part of the Sultan's dominions.

In 1835, the officers of the Indian Navy, who were conducting the nautical survey of the Arabian Coast, which had been begun in 1820, arrived at Dhofar, and it is to the valuable and accurate reports of Captain S. B. Haines, Lieutenants Wellsted and Cruttenden, and Drs. Carter and Hulton, etc., we are indebted for most of the information we possess about this part of the country.

At a later date another adventurer essayed, for a brief space, to play the part of ruler on the Dhofar stage. This was the intriguing Mopla Seyyid Fadhl, who had been compelled by the Government of India to quit Malabar in 1852, and whose expatriation was one of the causes of the brutal murder of Mr. Conolly in 1855. This Mopla Seyyid Fadhl at first settled at Mecca, where he resided for many years, but having incurred the displeasure of the Shereef of that city he was obliged to leave it and retired to Dhofar, where he assumed the control of affairs in 1878 for some eighteen months, until the inhabitants, unable to endure his tyrannical conduct any longer, drove him out of the place.

In 1880 Seyyid Fadhl then proceeded to Constantinople, where he was received by the Sultan with great distinction, being given the Order of the Medjidie and made a field-marshal. He was then directed to return to Dhofar, and a consignment of arms and ammunition was despatched for his use, but the vessel did not proceed beyond Aden, and the occupation of Dhofar in the following year by Muscat troops frustrated any further attempt on the part of Seyyid Fadhl to establish himself in that quarter.

Geography of Dhofar.

At the western end of Kooria Mooria bay we enter upon the province of Dhofar, which extends as far as Ras Shajr, a distance of 130 statute miles with an extreme breadth of eighteen, from the sea to where the hills merge into the desert.

The province consists of a maritime plain, ten miles wide in

the centre and about forty in length, backed and enclosed by a crescent-shaped range of hills 2,000 to 4,000 feet in elevation, sloping towards the desert of Al-Ahkaf and covering an area perhaps of 2,000 square miles. Limited as it is in extent it must nevertheless be regarded, in view of the character of its inhabitants and its natural productions, as one of the most remarkable and most interesting districts in the Arabian peninsula. The appellation, Dhofar, appears ever to have signified the whole province, and never to have been that of a town, in particular. The oldest mention we have of it, Genesis, refers to it not as a town but as a mountain.

The fertile alluvial tract terminates on the coast with a sharp curve at each end, that on the east being Bundar Merbat and on the west Bundar Raysoot, the former being a well-sheltered anchorage in the north-east monsoon. Numerous streams spring from the hills and irrigate the plain, some being well wooded and grassy, and enter the creeks; the soil is remarkably rich and productive, being capable, it is said, of producing three crops in the year. Groves of coconuts may be seen, while tobacco, cotton, indigo, cereals, pulse and vegetables are cultivated.

The inhabitants of the plain mostly belong to the Katheeri tribe, one of the chief clans of Hadhramaut, where they occupy the country between Shibam and Seiyoon and possess Seiyoon and Tereem. The Katheeris are said to have first invaded Dhofar in the beginning of the ninth century of the Hijrah, under a famous leader, Bedr-ba-Towarek, who conquered the country and became Lord of Hadhramaut and Dhofar. With varying fortunes the Katheeris have remained the predominant tribe in the plain ever since, and are always at feud with the Garas, by whom they are often attacked and harassed. The Katheeris are in two divisions, the Omar bin Kathir and the Amr bin Kathir, both of which are represented in Dhofar, where they may number 2,500, occupying seven villages. The plain is studded with the ruins of several ancient towns, attesting the populousness and prosperity of former times, but the precise age of only two of these cities, namely, old Merbat and Al-Balad, can be ascertained with any degree of certainty.

At the western end of the Kooria Mooria Bay is Ghubbet Doom, into which falls the Wady Rekot, a long and important valley draining the northern slope of the Samhan range, dividing it from the desert. This wady is said to be well wooded and fertile, and after rain it naturally forms a raging torrent. A short distance south of Khor Rekot lie the ruins of Hasek, an ancient town mentioned by Ptolemy and once a depot for the exportation of frankincense, with Sook Hasek near the anchorage. This town belonged to the Ba Malik tribe and was destroyed in the early part of the nineteenth century by the Attoobees, or, as some say, by the Beni Yas, who carried the women and children into slavery. The town derives its name from an ancient tribe who inhabited it. They are now extinct but their names survive also in the neighbouring islet of Hasiki, about twenty miles from the shore. The Hasek tribe are no doubt identical with the Askitea of Pliny and were a branch of the Abd al-Kais.

Frowning sheer and precipitous behind Hasek is the bare limestone mass of the Samhan range, one bluff of which, known as Jebel Habroot, probably a corruption of Kabr Hood, has been estimated as rising to a height of 4,000 feet.

Ten miles south of Ras Hasek, and lying at the south-west corner of Kooria Mooria Bay is Ras Noos, near which is Kabr Sali bin Hood, a stone structure now very dilapidated. Just over it is Jebel Noos, 1,200 feet high, which forms the eastern extremity of the Samhan range. From this point to Merbat, a distance of forty miles, runs a bare level rocky strip of coast, of granite formation, ten miles broad, known as Salhao, half-way along which is Jebel Jinjieri, a pyramidal peak of soft nummulitic limestone and gypsum 1,300 feet in elevation, and further on is Khor Sedha, where trading boats and slavers take in water.

Round Ras Zuheir, or Merbat, is Merbat Bay, a well-protected and safe anchorage in the north-east monsoon, with a hamlet of about twenty stone houses and a few miserable hovels; there are a few Indian khojas here who concentrate in their hands all the frankincense trade of Dhofar, and a garrison of sixteen Muscat

Arabs is stationed in the fort to protect them from the Gara Bedouins, who are sometimes very troublesome. The port is visited by native craft, by which the commerce with Bombay is carried on, but the water here is bad and scanty, the nearest good supply of sweet water being four miles distant. The tomb of Mohammed Ali, which bears the date 556 A.H. [A.D. 1160], is about one mile off and is in good preservation. The customs revenue from the Khojas is paid to the Wali at Sallala.

From Merbat a narrow belt of coast trends northward, for about twenty miles, to Thaka, presenting for about half the distance a low cliff 100 feet high, over which towers the lofty and majestic tableland of Samhan. This great mass is composed, we are told, of micaceous sandstone superimposed by argillaceous strata, above which is white limestone, the precipitous face being scarped part of the way down and projecting in great ridges. At the other end of the range we shall find that Ras Shajr presents a very similar formation.

Thaka is a village of about 400 inhabitants and has some cultivation. There are three creeks in the vicinity: Khor Thaka, Khor Seive, and Khor Reiri, the last being a deep and capacious backwater extending up for about two miles, where it bifurcates, having a narrow sand bar at the entrance. These creeks receive copious streams from ravines in the mountains above and the water in them is generally sweet.

Near Thaka are the ruins of an extensive mediæval city of forgotten renown. Bent suggests that this is the site of Merbat mentioned by the Arabian geographers of the third and fourth centuries of the Hijrah, and he is probably right. Owing to the violent surf which breaks on the coast for a great part of the year, vessels touching at Dhofar are in great need of shelter and security, but protection could be well provided in the creeks near Thaka at that time before the bars were formed. The word Merbat means literally "Moorings," and the term would apply more appositely to the creek near Thaka than to Merbat. Many considerations therefore, lead to the conclusion that this was the emporium and

seaport which was referred to by Istakari, Ibn Haukal, Masoodi, etc., as flourishing in their time, which was situated near Thaka, and that its name has only survived by being transferred to the village and anchorage twenty miles distant.

Proceeding westward along the maritime plain to Bundar Raysoot we arrive first at Dareez, once the capital of the Katheeris, after which is Robat, near which is the shrine of the Hindoo Raja of Cranganore known as Al-Samiri, and the ruins of Al-Balad, concerning which we shall have to speak further on. They we come to Hafa and Sallala, where the Wali resides, and the two villages of Okoad called Al-Sharki and Al-Gharbi, the east and the west, the latter being four miles from Raysoot. Along the plain, a distance of forty miles, there are, according to Cruttendon, eleven creeks or backwaters, five of which are of sweet water.

Taken along its curvature the ridge of the Samhan range from east to west is many miles in length. The appellation, Samhan, however, belongs more correctly to the eastern portion, where the peaks rise to an elevation of 4,000 feet, and are in some parts thickly wooded to the summit ; towards the west the hills decline in height and are not so well clothed with vegetation, the tops being almost bare of trees. From the plain the range rises rapidly and exhibits a precipitous face towards the sea, while on the northern side it slopes gradually towards the desert. There does not appear to be any general name for the western portion of the range, each peak being distinguished separately, and the following names were given to those of the peaks from Ras Haboot to Ras Shajr, namely :— Jebel Bekan, Jebel Dhayern-wa-Salat, Jebel Al-Karha, Jebel Bait Faya, Jebel Hadbad-wa-Mara, Jebel Naheez, Jebel Harzat, Jebel Bait Zebeed, Jebel Rasham and Jebel Arkam. These hills are honeycombed with caves of various sizes, most of which are occupied by the Garas in cold and wet weather.

The animals found at Dhofar are the wild cat, fox, hyena, hare, hystrix or coney, gazelle, ibex, etc. Among the flora are Boswellia, sycamore, acacia, bdellium, pomegranate, aloe, fig, tamarind, tamarisk, lime, indigo, rhamnus, coconut, dragon's blood and many others which have not been identified.

The nautical survey of the southern coast of Arabia, undertaken in 1835 by the Bombay Government, and carried out by the Indian Navy, gave occasion to several valuable memoirs by Captain Haines, Dr. Carter and others. Their descriptions form the groundwork of our knowledge of the physiography of the land, but the Dhofar range remained unexplored until 1894, when Mr. Bent visited and unfolded the romantic and picturesque scenery of precipice and valley, the lakes and waterfalls, the stalactite caves, and the dense and luxuriant verdure to be seen in these mountains. He also throws light on the interesting and peculiar occupants of these hills, the Garas, who speak a language of their own, but are akin to the Mahras.

At the western end of the Maritime plain of Dhofar a small bay is formed by a low projecting headland known as Ras Raysoot. This bay is an excellent anchorage in the south-west monsoon, and near by are the remains of an ancient town, which was at one time an emporium of trade. There is a long lagoon here, into which a large ravine, collecting the water from the hills above, discharges. Off this point the pilgrim steamer *William the Conqueror* was wrecked in 1860, but the passengers and crew were saved and taken to India in five bughlas. From Ras Raysoot commences a low scarped cliff which extends westward, and at five miles we come to Ras Ahmar, 700 feet high, composed of limestone and cretaceous rocks; this is one of the places from which the Garas obtain the stone pipes they use for smoking.

Twenty-seven miles west of Ras Ahmar, after passing Ghubbet Fezaija, the outer ridge of the range, rising to a height of 3,380 feet, descends to the sea in three gigantic steps, to form the great promontory of Ras Shajr, the loftiest and most stupendous, though not perhaps the most salient, on the south coast of Arabia. The second bluff of this cape is 2,770 feet. At this point, Ras Shajr, the dominions of the Sultan of Muscat terminate, and here also is the dividing line between the Mahras and the Garas, although, in fact, the Garas claim and partly occupy the land as far west as the village of Rakyoot twelve miles distant.

Geologically Carter states that the formation of Ras Shajr is similar to that of the Jebel Samhan, near Merbat, being composed at the base of micaceous sandstone, then of argillaceous strata, above all white limestone, the strata being horizontal with a slight dip to the north-east.

Visit to Al-Askhara in 1874.

August 31st.—Left Muscat at 4 p.m. for Al-Askhara with Saeed bin Seleyyim on board H.M.S. *Philomel* to enquire into piracy case.

September 1st.—Saw Kilhat at 10 a.m. and reached Soor at 2 p.m. Sent Dervish and Saeed on shore to call on Wali and landed at 5 p.m. and found Wali just arrived. Held a conference in Jethoo's house and arranged that Majid and Abdulla should be written to, to meet us at Al-Askhara. Was told that a collision had occurred the day before, in which two or three men were killed. The Wali Nasir Bin Mohammed al-Bu Saeedi arrived at Soor eight days ago overland, but he has no power and is not likely to stay for he gets no revenue and has had to pay 60 dollars already to Beni Bu Hassan Bedouins. Visited town and Khor afterwards and saw a good many bughlas still in creek getting ready for sea. Returned on board in evening. Dervish stayed.

September 2nd.—Dervish and Jethoo came off. Wrote to Majid and Hamod. Jethoo says no danger in travelling about the country provided you have khafeers Ghafiri and Hinawi with you; these protectors are necessary to ensure safety. If the Bedouins find you alone, even in the temporary absence of these men, they will certainly plunder you.

People in Jaalan are haramis and not to be trusted when they scent money. Jethoo has been to Kilhat, where there is a ruined palace or fort under which, the people say, is a buried treasure, but they are afraid to dig on account of the Jenebeh and Beni Bu Ali, who would come down and plunder them of all they had and perhaps drive them out of the place altogether. Seedees sometimes go and look for gold coins there after rain, which they sell to the Soonais at

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DATE PALMS.

[*See p.* 395]

Soor for a dollar or so ; these coins, from the descriptions, seem to be cufics.

At 4 p.m. landed to go to Belad. Road leads north over stony and rising ground. Outside the town the khor appears to go some distance up but is here shallow. The forts of Senaisila and Shenoo are passed on the right of us ; forts have guns but are not garrisoned.

Road then turns to left until we reach Eis, which is a small defile with a mined fort on top, destroyed by Thowaini. It belonged to the Jenebeh. Belad is now visible ; it is in a low plain or valley and is a mass of date-trees, few houses being visible. On reaching the fort, which is in a tumbledown condition, I was received by the Wali with a salute. Sat in the gateway for some time and then took a walk over the place. Outside the fort is the ruined Sook or bazaar, which was destroyed by Sedeyree the Wahabee. The Banians' houses are still standing. Not much cultivation here. Melons and a little grain seem to be all. I was invited by the Beni Bu Hassan Shaikhs to visit their country, which is beyond Wafee, they said. Wali seems an intelligent and determined man but has no sinecure in dealing with these Jenebeh scoundrels.

Returned to Sahil about 7.30 p.m. ; quite dark, obtained a pilot, Ali bin Mobarek, who came on board with Dervish at 10 p.m. By the inhabitants Soor is called Al-Sahil, and the upper town is known as Al-Belad.

September 3rd.—Started at 5.30 a.m. and reached Ras al-Had at 9. The actual point of this cape is very low, merely a sandy spit, but the hills in the background are visible from a great distance. The residence of the Shaikh is a small fort with three towers, and the hamlet is called Belad Ras al-Had. There are, perhaps, 600 people under the Shaikh, called Beni-wa-Beni, and consist of three divisions, the Al-Mowalik, Beni Ghozal, and Beni Mahra, the last tracing its descent from a Mahra ancestor. The coast is bold but the rocks very bare to Ras Khabba. I saw a few Bedouins on the hills of the Beni Harbee, a small sect of thirty men. Between Khabba and Ruwais the coast is called Saweih Beni Bu Ali. It strikes me to-day that Kilhat is the Acilla of Pliny. Forster has missed this

identification, but the article in Al-Kilhat is incorporated with the name.

Arrived at Al-Askhara at 4 p.m. Much less windy than I expected round the cape. The town appears to be large, of mat huts mostly, with a few stone ones, and lies among the sandhills a few miles from the beach, but on account of the hillocks of sand only part of it is visible from the sea. The fishing boats are observed all drawn up in line and covered with matting, about forty of them. There is no fort, but two ruined towers stand on the beach. There is a projecting line of reefs to the south of the town, which serves to distinguish it and acts as a shelter to the boats from the surf. We see only one boat still in the water, and no signs of anyone coming off.

September 4th.—Shaikhs arrived this morning and are pitching a tent on the beach made out of an old sail apparently. At 10 o'clock a canoe with two Seedees came off with letters from Majid and Abdulla. Majid says he is ill, and Abdulla wants some one sent on shore. I sent Saeed bin Musallim and the pilot to them with letter requesting them to come on board (not too many) and promising safety. Seedee says no slaves have arrived this year from Zanzibar, there are few slaves in Al-Askhara but numerous freedmen. At 12 o'clock the boat returned with Shaikh Abdulla, Yusof bin Ali, the Jenebeh Shaikh, Ali bin Khalfan, and the pilot explained to them what I had come for and heard their explanations of the matter which was that the Lashkhareh boats, seeing a disturbance among the Kitia men on the island, went to interfere and stop the quarrel, but that the Kitia men, seeing them coming, became afraid and ran away. Told them I had come to demand restitution of the plunder and the surrender of the offenders and their boats. They admitted the plunder to have been about 300 dollars and agreed to pay it up and said they submitted at once to the demands of Government whatever they were ; I gave them until to-morrow morning to consider and reply. Ali Mubarek says he considers the limit of Oman to be the same with furthest land of Al-Jenebeh at Ras *

* Name omitted by author, probably he meant Ras Noos.

opposite Kooria Mooria. The Jenebeh extend to Jibsh, then come Hikman, then Bar al-Hadhei, then Al-Waheebeh, then Jenebeh again to the Garas tribe. Al-Hadhramaut commences from east at Shihr. The Mahra country is not in it. There is no general name for the country between Jaalan and Al-Gara. Mesineh belongs to Jenebeh. It has no cultivation and the inhabitants are Bedoos, who live on milk and flesh. The limit of Oman towards the desert is Adam. The Awamir at Ras Noos are genuine Bedoos and wear Hadhramaut clothes and speak a different dialect to Oman; it is hardly intelligible but is better Arabic.

Some Awamir have lately arrived at Muscat and joined Turkee, they came overland all the way on camels; in some places they were five or six days without water. They pay no road tax but are obliged to take kefeer. If protégé of kefeer be murdered, blood money cannot be taken, he must be avenged by blood. The same with the kefeer; the custom of kefeer is punctiliously adhered to. If the traveller or kefeer be killed, and, if both the kefeers are Ghafiri and Hinawi, the tribes rise and unite to avenge him. Camels in some districts are only watered once or twice a month. In passing waterless tracts, camels go without, and men drink the milk only.

A schooner was wrecked on this shore in Rassam's time and the crew taken overland to Muscat by Bedoos, who fed them on camels' milk and dates, which gave them diarrhœa, as a remedy for which the Bedoos seared them all over with hot irons.

September 5th.—At 10 a.m. I sent a boat for the Shaikhs, who came off and said that during the night the offenders had bolted from the town into the interior, but they had sent some of the Lashkhareh people after them and expected they would be brought back. The night before they had agreed to surrender themselves, on condition of the other Shaikhs accompanying them to Muscat, to which they had consented. They said the Jaaferees had never committed themselves before and were very repentant, and that if the offenders did not surrender they would hand over the six boats belonging to them. I said we remembered good actions as well as

bad ones and their conduct in shipwrecks was not forgotten, that they had misbehaved once and might do so twice, etc. I then said I would take 600 dollars on account of the property plundered and as a fine, but as I was going this evening I wanted it at once. The Shaikhs said they could not collect it for three or four days but said they would deposit jewels with me until paid. They said they would come off in the evening with Jaafera headmen to conclude business. I gave Abdulla a gun and some cloth. At 5 p.m. I sent Saeed on shore to fetch them, but he returned alone at 5 p.m. and said the Shaikhs had not been able to collect anything yet and had therefore not come. The six men concerned had returned to the town.

September 6th.—Sent off Saeed at 9 a.m. to the shore; he returned at 2 p.m. with the Shaikhs and about half a dozen of the Jaafera elders, dirty looking men. I admonished them, and they assured me they were not with the six men in this matter and had not approved of their proceedings at all, and promised it should not occur again. Yusof said they had endeavoured to collect the money and jewels but had got little. In the whole place they had collected less than 200 dollars and the ornaments were so paltry that they were ashamed to show them. They promised to come round to Soor with me, Yusof and Abdulla, and borrow the money from Jethoo, and hand it over there. In the meanwhile, prohibiting the Jaafera from going to sea and seizing their date-trees until the money was paid up, I required that some of the Jaafera should also come round to Soor, and it was so arranged accordingly, namely, that eight of them should accompany us. I told them to be ready at daylight to-morrow.

September 7th.—I sent a boat at daylight, but it not coming off I sent Saeed in whaler to hasten them. They came off at 9.30, Abdulla, Yusof, and eight or ten others. The reason of the delay appears to have been that on sending for the six culprits, the latter had taken up arms and refused to come without a fight, a row ensued and matters were looking serious. Saeed, however, ended the matter by letting them off. The Shaikhs have bound the Jaafera

over not to put to sea this season until the fine is paid, the dates and gardens belonging to them have also been pledged to Abdulla until released.

The Beni Bu Ali and Jenebeh are Wahabees and will not eat meat killed by others. The Shaikhs hold 200 dollars and have to produce 400 more to make up the account. Abdulla, it appears, has dealings with Jethoo, but Yusof's credit is not good apparently. I arrived at Soor at 6 p.m. and sent them on shore to do what they can with Jethoo. The boat did not return till 8 o'clock.

September 8th.—Seyyid Nasir, the Wali, and the Shaikhs with Jethoo came off at 11 a.m. and said the arrangement was concluded, as they had obtained the loan. Gave them some more warnings and advice, especially about the slave trade. Told them they would not be interfered with unless they carried slaves in their vessels. Jethoo said he was willing to lend them the money on the terms accepted by them. They have handed him over 200 dollars and are to stay in Soor until the balance is produced. The Wali said there was no fresh news from Muscat or about Sultan. The Shaikhs returned on shore at 1 o'clock. At 4 p.m. I landed with Garforth and went to Jethoo's, where we saw the Shaikhs and Wali. Garforth and others then went with Wali to Al-Belad, while I went on camel to Senaisila to examine the fort there. It is untenanted and is in a state of disrepair but is still serviceable, the gate is the strongest part and is towards the sea, but has a wall in front. This fort is completely commanded by the hills near.

The Senaisila are Ghafiri and number 200. I saw a moolla there, apparently a Pinjabu or Hindustanee man. There is a large musjid and several decent houses. I returned at dusk and had a conversation with Abdulla and Yusof about Turkee having cast off Ghafiris and taken up Hinawis. They said that Saleh bin Ali looted Muttrah and had since had all his own way in the country and they were afraid he would induce Turkee to attack the Beni Bu Ali, as Saleh was bitterly hostile to them on account of their having killed Azzan and put Turkee on the throne. I reminded them that when Saleh came to Muttrah not one Ghafiri in the country had raised a finger to help

Turkee and that he had not been supported by the Ghafiris as he ought to have been, but that the Beni Bu Ali were friends of the E ,* and if any split occurred between them, I should be ready to use my good offices to prevent hostilities and to maintain a good understanding and peace in the country, etc.

They produced the bag of dollars afterwards, and it was formally accepted of them. Dervish then distributed his presents to them all. The pilot got fifteen dollars. I promised Shaikh Abdulla bin Salim a gun for his son Mohammed, who is a promising lad and has influence. Yusof is to have a gun when he next comes to Muscat.

The Wali returned with Garforth and party at 8 p.m. and said he had to go back immediately as some of the Beni Bu Hassan Bedouins were there and were coming on to Muscat to get nafa. The Wali receives a handsome reward as he has been most attentive and obliging all through. Returned on board at 8.30 p.m.

September 9th.—Started at 6.30 a.m. for Kilhat, where we arrived at about 9 a.m. Landed at 10 and visited ruins. They are situated between the shore and the hills, which rise about a mile up and are of very uneven ground, covered with loose cobble stones, boulders, and coral.

The southern limit is a wall, stretching from the sea to the hills towards Soor, in which were three towers, the outlines of which are clearly traceable ; one of which fell down only last year. The foundations of many houses are visible and the walls of a few are still partly standing. There is also a tomb, once domed, and lined inside with coloured tiles, it is about fourteen feet square and is now minus the domed roof ; there is a vault underground which probably held the coffin but is now empty. Close by is a rectangular and deep reservoir for water, partly filled with rubbish, but with a fine wide arch over it ; this was evidently to catch rainwater, being in a water-course.

To the north of this is the Wady Asin, which comes out of the Wady Khalid, and has a flow of good water, sufficiently plentiful to

* Name omitted in original MS.

irrigate some fields at Wady Sakrat, a valley five or six miles up, where there are kanats, and there is a large pool of water at Meida, a short way up, where the women go to wash, bathe, and fetch water ; the outlet of the torrent is wide and shows that a considerable body of water comes down it. On the north of this is the present Kilhat, now merely a fishing village, inhabited by the Shaaban, a petty tribe of 200 souls ; these people draw their water from shallow wells or pits in the torrent bed and possess goats and sheep. To the north of this is another smaller torrent, which debouches into the sea near the village.

North of this again are some more ruins, and this appears to have been the chief part of the old town ; there was a tower and perhaps a wall here too, and here I got a fragment of an inscription. I have not, however, inspected this part properly. Here are said to be the remains of an aqueduct leading from the interior and is in good preservation, the name of which is Ghala. Coins are found here with Oman mintage, probably struck here or at Nezwa in the time of the Bowide Dynasty. This place is not much like Aden except in miniature. The view from the Front Bay, where the harbour is under Seera Island, would present something of the same appearance, only Aden is on a larger scale and the grandeur is wanting in this. Kilhat looks a poor place and most unsuitable for a town at first sight, but has advantages on further inspection, having plenty of good water, which is scarce at Soor. This was probably the cause of its being chosen in preference to Soor. The houses and buildings were all of coral and cobbles, no hewn or shaped stones anywhere being visible. Received from the Shaikh some tiles from a tomb brought from Persia and an inscription in coloured stucco done by a Persian artist. The water is very deep close in shore. To the south of the south wall is a large iron ring in the rock over the sea, probably used for mooring. The coast all along here is steep, ten to fifteen fathoms being found within 100 yards. There is a low headland or reef sticking out some way at Kilhat south of the khor, which forms a good anchorage for bughlas. Soor is certainly more suited for a large port, but I can easily understand

why Kilhat was chosen in preference in former days; the bar and the entire absence of sweet water at Soor militate strongly against it.

At 12 o'clock I went on board, after giving the Shaikh a few dollars and some powder, in return for the inscription which I carried off. At 2 p.m. the *Philomel* anchored off Taiwee, which is situated at the mouth of an apparently deep valley with very precipitous sides, but there is a patch of palm and a streak of water visible. The village is to the north of the wady and close to the beach. At 5 p.m. the Shaikh came on board. Afterwards I landed and walked up the valley and found the town clean with many stone houses, having 500 or 600 inhabitants, all Beni Jabir. Khutba, until fifteen years ago, read for Sultan of Turkey; Sunnis and Wahabees in Jaalan still do so.

The Shaikh considered that the Sultan of Turkey was Khalifa of Islam. Up the valley is the reputed tomb of Ibn al-Mukaire, a celebrated poet of Al-Hasar, who retired here and built his own tomb on the hill. To the south of Taiwee is Wady Fakk, which is quite distinct from Taiwee valley and shorter but with a greater flow of water. Just south of Taiwee are the ruins of Jereyf, an ancient town destroyed at a very early date, but there is a tower still standing and some remains.

Visit to Kilhat in 1874.

September 25th.—Left Muscat at 5 p.m. in *May Frere* for the south coast.

September 26th.—Passed Taiwee at 4 a.m. and arrived at Kilhat at 6, sounding the coast as we came along. Landed at 11 a.m. at lower creek and went up it some distance. Proceeded to village and thence up to Al-Shaikh, which has a commanding view of the town and where are some ruins, said to be those of the Governor's residence and of a small tower, which seems probable. Underneath this low spur of the hills, which is about 120 feet in elevation, lie the present village, and the upper creek, which also belongs to the Wady Issa, but is on the other side of the debouchment. We

started after this to visit Maida and Sakherat on donkeys. At half-a-mile we reach Maida, which is merely a deep pool lying directly under the high perpendicular cliffs forming the banks of the wady and about 1,000 feet high. Bed of wady is stony and fringed with oleanders, camel thorn, and other plants. A few hundred yards further on are other deep pools, named Safee, and about two miles further, the wady gradually ascending and changing from east and west to north and south, we come to Sakherat and the affluent Wady Kubdee, on the right hand. To our left is Mezra, a small patch of cultivation. Sakherat belongs to no one in particular. Beyond this is an old Persian tower in ruins and on the road the Arabs pointed out the site of an old Hindoo temple, traditioning the residence of the Banians at Kilhat. At the corner of Wady Kubdee is the path leading up the hill to Kubdee ; it is a short cut for donkeys and the road traverses a plateau for some hours and then descends on the opposite side. At Sakherat, we rested an hour by the side of a stream full of sudd or small fish. This stream is fed by springs close by, but water is met with continuously for some miles up. The aqueduct that used to supply Kilhat with water, and of which we saw traces all along the valley on the left hand side coming along, though generally destroyed, is here distinctly visible, and the remains show that this was the terminus. It was supplied from the springs near, while they are a little higher in elevation. Just below this is a square reservoir or tank in excellent preservation inside, and the portion of the aqueduct leading from it still remains ; it must have been an important work, this aqueduct.

There are said to have been 101 wells at Kilhat, from which the town was also supplied, the remains of many of which may still be seen. Beyond Sakherat and Hahm are several villages, Ghotha, Mahatt, Shofee, Siffin or Isfrin, Ghab, Jisseh, Houl, etc. The haven in ancient days must have been a fine one, as ships are traditioned to have anchored as far up as the outlet of the wady, from the hills, or up to the foot of the hills nearly. The harbour, however, with the exception of two small creeks, has now disappeared, having been filled up with boulders; whether this has happened

through the incessant washing down of soil by the torrent or whether it is the result of the earthquake, which occurred about 300 years ago, is a problem ; probably the latter is the true reason. Proceeded on to Soor and anchored there for the night.

September 27th.—Guthrie landed and brought off Jethoo and the Eija Shaikh. At 11 a.m. I landed with Guthrie and we went up Shaikh Ali, a hill overlooking Soor and Eija, to photograph the scenery. Returned on board at 3 p.m. Got a good view and idea of Soor generally. Guthrie made some notes about the bar and creek.

September 28th.—Landed with Guthrie at 7 a.m. and went to Jethoo. He said Seyyid Nasir had gone to Al-Wafi to escape the importunities of the Bedoos. No slaves had been landed this year and none were expected. His own bughla was to be launched to-day. A quarrel had arisen between the Beni Bu Ali and Al-Hejrieen, and the latter had had eight camel loads of rice looted. I saw the Eija Shaikh and Saleh bin Juma ; the former is a son of Rashid, but by a negress.

At 10 a.m. I started with a pilot on board for Khor Jeramah and arrived at about noon and went in gig with Guthrie to sound and explore the creek. A shoal off right bow of *May Frere* was found to be nine feet, but on going over the ground again we could not pick it up though we got two fathoms. The entrance is narrow and very winding. Inside, just as the creek opens out into a wide lagoon, is an island fringed with mangrove bushes. One bughla only was anchored there, loaded with limestone, and waiting for dates from Soor to fill up before sailing for Bombay. The lagoon is a fine sheet of water but with a drear and rocky background ; the general height of the hills around the shore seems to be about 100 feet, except to the south-west, where it is flat. On the west side are mangrove trees, and a small colony of fishermen reside hereabouts. It is otherwise quite unfrequented except by bughlas in October and November, which assemble in numbers at that time from Busra waiting for the subsidence of the monsoon winds before they start across for Bombay. Returned to ship at

10 o'clock and then Guthrie determined to take the steamer in. The tide was now at half ebb, and on steaming ahead the *May Frere* did not move at first and seemed to be aground, though there were two or three fathoms on each side; on going ahead to the first turn the current proved so strong that she would not obey the helm, and her head, though being only part exposed to the full force of the tide, was driven back, and she then drifted so close against the rock that I thought she must have struck. By great care and steadiness, however, Guthrie managed to get her on and we then anchored further up until the tide should have slackened. Guthrie was not to be beaten, and at about 4 o'clock we started on again, and got safely through the very intricate passage to the lagoon, where we circumnavigated the old bughla and then steamed out of the khor again, which we did with comparative ease. As far as depth of water goes, there is no danger except at the shoal at the entrance, but the turns, especially the last one near the island, are so sharp that the vessel's stern is no sooner out of one curve than her nose is into another. On coming out, the boat left by Guthrie to mask the shoal sounded 9 fathoms and 11 fathoms in places, showing that there is much or more water in it at ebb than there is at flow; the cause of this probably is that the scour being so great the sand is cleared away at ebbing, while the incoming tide brings it back again. We came away about sunset and anchored for the night at Soor, where we discharged the pilot, Rashid bin Musellim, a good man. The pilot said they had no recollection of any ship having been inside Jeramah before, and I believe the *May Frere* is the first and only one, though the *Berenice* got in as far as the island a few years ago.

September 29th.—Started at sunrise, passed Kilhat at 8 a.m., and reached Shaab at 10, sounding all along. I landed and went up khor for about a mile, the sides of which are very steep and precipitous. At half-a-mile further fresh water mingles with salt and the path then leads along a very romantic glen in which are various fruit trees. Guthrie went on further until he came to a fulaj and hamlet used by the Shaab people, who return there every

day. Even donkeys cannot ascend this path. It is said that beyond this is a lofty cliff with a waterfall, the source of which is unknown. It all belongs to the Beni Jabir and the Shaab people are Beni Ryam, a clan of that tribe. We returned and took some photographs of the valley. The Shaikh of Shaab was absent at Taiwee but was sent for, and came before we left.

Visit to Beraimi in 1875.

One of the earliest trips made by me into the interior of Oman was undertaken with the view of visiting Al-Beraimi, a frontier town, which had formerly been for many years the headquarters of the Wahabee force sent from Nejd to invade and conquer Oman.

On January 17th, 1875, I landed at Sohar from H.M.S. *Rifleman,* in which vessel Captain Clayton had kindly given me a passage from Muscat, and proceeded to the quarters assigned to me by the Governor, Seyyid Bedr bin Saif, to make preparations for the journey. As it was intimated to me that it would take some little time to collect the camels, I profited by the opportunity to examine the town and its vicinity.

Sohar has been for many centuries the largest and most important town on the Batineh Coast, though it was at this time in a very decayed condition, only a small part of the area within the circuit of the walls being occupied by dwellings, the population having dwindled to about 4,000. It was probably a rich emporium in very ancient times, when a brisk trade existed between Babylonia and India, and is generally believed to be the mart on the Maka promontory referred to in the voyage of Nearchus in 320 B.C. Further, we find allusion to it in the Classical writers, if we agree to the identification of Sohar with the ancient city of Oman, the capital of the country, which depends not alone on Arab tradition and authority but is generally accepted by European scholars, who see in it the Omana or Omna of Pliny and Ptolemy. The exact period, however, at which the town changed its name is a question more difficult of

solution, and regarding which history and tradition afford no clue. Though occasional references are made to Sohar in the middle ages by the local annalists, the best description I know of is given by Ibn al-Mojawir, who says, "Sohar had 12,000 houses, and every nakhoda dwelt in a separate house, and the people used to draw their drinking water from the aqueduct. Some told me there were 192 steel yards for the weighing of merchandize between vendors and purchasers. The town was built of bricks, mortar, and teak wood and it became ruined and the jinn haunted the castles around. Abu Bekr al-Bisri informed me that the country belonged first to the kings of Kirman of the Seljook Dynasty, then it was ruled by the Al-Ghozz and afterwards it became deserted and was destroyed by the Arabs."

One of the signs of the former prosperity of Sohar is the aqueduct Felej al-Motaridh, which supplied it with water in ancient times. The work is of good stone masonry and leads along the surface of the ground with a gentle declivity from the Wady Jezzi in the vicinity of Hoora Barga, or Sohar Peak as we call it, to the shore, a distance in a straight line of fourteen or fifteen miles, and is still distinctly traceable for the greater part of the way, disappearing at the outskirts of the present town; I noticed by the side of it more than one small cistern of exactly the same pattern and construction as those on Jebel Gharabeh.

As a fortress, Sohar is memorable among the Arabs for the heroic defence against the Persians in 1743 A.D., by Ahmed bin Saeed, the founder of the present dynasty in Oman. The circumvallation of the town, which stands close to the beach, is about a mile in length and there is a moat on the land side, but there is no harbour, nor even the slightest shelter for native craft.

The citadel, which contains the Governor's residence, is a lofty square plain building with a strong entrance. In the second storey of the house is the tomb of Seyyid Thowaini bin Saeed, but I did not see it as the room had recently been bricked up. Of the nine persons who were accessories to the murder of this chieftain in 1866, six had already died by violent deaths, and the parricide, Seyyid Salim, only survived his brother about ten years. From the roof an excellent

view is obtained of the surrounding country, and a lovely landscape it is, the seashore being fringed with a belt of stately palms, gardens, and cultivation, about three miles broad, while, in the background, the plain rises gradually until broken up by the spurs of the dark serrated range of Jebel Hajar. Accompanied by Shaikh Rashid bin Hamed, who had formerly been for some time Governor of Al-Beraimi, and who had been selected as my guide and escort by Seyyid Bedr, I started in the morning about 10 a.m. and passed Auhy, a country residence of the Imam's, at three miles.

The road now takes us to the Wady Jezzi at the foot of the hills, and we notice, on the way, the side of a ruined town apparently unwalled and covering altogether a considerable extent of ground. Rectangular and oval heaps of black basaltic stones mark the place of habitations, while the débris of circular towers remain piled on the neighbouring heights. The locality is prolific in tradition, and I learnt that the town flourished during the occupation of the Persians in the Days of Ignorance, that is before the introduction of Islam, and that it was visited by destruction by God on account of the refusal of the Persians to accept the true faith. There is no reason to reject this tradition entirely, and it probably formed one of the settlements under the protective shadow of the Persian stronghold Jamsetjerd, the site of which I was able to identify on my way back.

At Sehlat, a village some miles further on, we rested while the camels were being fed. At Mileyyeneh we find the wady more winding and the gradient more severe, until we reach Hail. Near Mileyyeneh there is an arched aqueduct, evidently of very ancient construction. It is ascribed to the Persians, before Islam, and belongs now to the Beni Gheith. It is still serviceable and supplies the village of Ghorak from a felej on the other bank. Here we were overtaken by a heavy thunderstorm, which soon drenched us to the skin and made the path so slippery that the camels would not venture out of a walk. It was impossible not to be struck by the beauty of the scene, which was very grand; the dark blue hills of the background streaked by deepest black ravines and gorges, with ridge upon ridge of lower hills in front being lighted up here and there

by the rays of the sun, now near setting, glancing through a rent in the dark heavy masses of clouds above us. It was long after dark when we reached the groves of Saheel, a village thirty miles from Sohar, and here, the Arabs, having lost the path in the inky darkness, we became entangled among the conduits irrigating the fields and palms, until the villagers came to our rescue and showed us where to camp for the night.

The next day, travelling more rapidly, we pass after an hour an affluent on the right bank called Wady al-Safam, up which is a village of the same name. Some miles further on we come to Burj al-Shikairi and soon after another village called Kan, memorable for the desperate and bloody conflict between the Sultan of Muscat and the Wahabees, some sixty years ago, in which the Sultan's troops suffered a disastrous defeat, and, being disheartened by the terrible slaughter, opened the way to Shenas, where a second battle took place in which they were again defeated. The towers of Al-Shikairi had been previously built with the object of checking the progress of the Wahabees, but proved quite ineffectual for the purpose.

An hour and a-half further on we came to the Wady Wasit, after which we reach the village of Al-Khowairej, where the date groves and cultivation are very extensive, affording a pleasing and refreshing spectacle after our long ride through drear and arid hills, the fields on the right bank being arranged in terraces and advantage being taken of every available patch of ground capable of production. Contiguous to Khowairej is Hail, another large village, the two together forming the most considerable settlement I met with between Sohar and Al-Beraimi.

Perched on a peninsula rock opposite to Hail is Al-Raby, an ancient watch tower which probably marked the limit of the Persian occupation before Islam. Near Hail the Wady Jezzi is joined by another affluent, the Wady Abaila, up which the road now leads, the course of the former running up west-south-west towards Kabil and Senaina.

A few miles up the Wady Jezzi is, I was informed, a steep gorge which is reckoned as the boundary, at this point, between Al-Dhahireh

and the Batineh. We now arrive at the highest point of the pass, which has an elevation of 1,860 feet, the peaks on either hand rising to a height of 1,000 feet or more above us. On descending the other side, we reach, after one hour, the Wady Ain, and continue over an unbroken plain to Al-Beraimi, the level expanse before us being alone broken by the isolated range of Jebel Hafeet, looming to the south-west, some twenty miles away.

On arrival at Al-Beraimi, I went to the house of Shaikh Salim bin Mohammed, whose father, the chief of the Naeen tribe, resides at Dhank. The following morning I set out to visit the Governor, Shaikh Hamed, who received me cordially and we sat talking while coffee went round; he was laid up with a dislocated shoulder, due to a fall from his camel a few days before. I noticed that the walls of the courtyard were loopholed for musketry and that a rusty iron gun lay half buried in the ground inside. I then proceeded to visit the fort, and on reaching the gate I received a salute of three guns, which put the ordnance hors de combat by dismounting them from rickety carriages and prevented any further expenditure of powder.

Shaikh Hamed's nephew showed me over the fort and explained everything with evident pride and pleasure, for their estimate of the strength and importance of the place is enormous; it was of square form, built entirely of mud or unburnt bricks, and consists of four towers united by curtains and surrounded by a deep ditch about 25 feet wide, the scarp and counter scarp being steep and faced with brickwork, while the towers appeared to be about half-way up, the length of each side being about 150 feet. The armament consists altogether of eight guns of sizes mostly unserviceable. Near the outer gate is a brass 24-pounder, mounted as a field piece, having the name Saeed bin Sultan, 1258 A.H. [A.D. 1842] in Arabic. and the English date, 1842. It is one of a batch of twenty that Seyyid Saeed procured from America, at this time, for his corvette *Sultan*, and was brought thither from Sohar in 1876 by Seyyid Azzan bin Kais and was used against the fort it now defends.

Al-Beraimi has always been regarded by the Arabs as commanding the road from Al Hasar and the Nejd, and they would consider

it necessary to hold its position in strength in the event of Oman being invaded from that direction. In the invasion, however, of the country by the Wahabees, towards the close of the eighteenth century, they took the place by force of arms and maintained their position in it as their headquarters and base of operations during the entire period of their occupation. The fort which has just been described was originally built by a section of the Naeen tribe known as the Showaries, but was greatly improved and strengthened by the Wahabees during their stay in Oman; it has now reverted to the pristine owners, the Naeen.

The name Al-Beraimi is applied to a collection of seven villages included within an area of about four miles in length and of which the one actually bearing the appellation is the largest and most important. The others are Suar to the north; Jaimi, Katar and Haili (to the north-west), and Ain and Motaridh to the south-east, and the population of the whole may be estimated at 15,000, whose general condition is low, and there is an apparent equality of property throughout, their dwellings being mostly palm leaf and mat huts, there being very few houses constructed of stone. They are not dependent on the annual rainfall, which is small, but are able to irrigate their fields by means of their felejes or aqueducts drawn from the hills, as well as from wells, water being plentiful and at no great depth; each settlement has at least one of these felejes, that of Al-Beraimi being brought from a spring in the hills distant about twenty miles.

Al-Jow, the district in which Al-Beraimi lies, forms the north-western part of the province of Al-Dhahireh. It is bounded to the south by Jebel Hafeet, to the north by the Semail, and to the west by the desert.

The predominant Ghafiri tribe is the Naeen, which is divided into two main sections and numerous sub-divisions. The chief Shaikh of the tribe is Mohammed bin Ali bin Hamed. The principal Hinawi tribe here is the Beni Yas, who formerly gained so much notoriety by their piratical exploits, who occupy at Al-Beraimi the villages of Jaimi, Katar, and Haili, and also the Wady Mesudi;

their chief Shaikh is Zaid bin Khaleefa, who resides at Abu Thubi. The Ghafiri tribe next in importance is the Beni Kaab, which numbers about 15,000 souls and occupies the district of Al-Madh, which includes the mountain range and valleys between the Wady Jezzi and Wady Hatat; they possess about twenty villages, the chief of which is Al-Madha, where the Shaikh Ali bin Saif resides. This Shaikh visited me during the day and was desirous I should see him at Al-Madha, but this I was unable to do. He told me he had been to Al-Riadh, having been taken captive by the Wahabees in his youth and carried thither in irons. He believed they were twenty-four days on the road from Al-Beraimi to Al-Hasar, as they travelled slowly, and there was plenty of water on the way. The route to Al-Hasar and Nejd, by which the Wahabees so frequently invade Oman, lies towards the west, and I was given an account of it by several persons who had traversed it, but the information was discrepant and varied in detail.

The first district beyond Al-Jow is Beinoona, in which is Al-Auka, a hamlet of the Beni Kattab. Next to Beinoona lies Al-Ghafai inhabited chiefly by the Minaseer Bedouins, where there is a watered grassy vale called Dafis, which is visited in season by nomads for the convenience of pasturage, and after this comes Al-Jafoor, or the desert, as far as Al-Hasar. There appear to be two general routes, one of which is used more in winter and the other in summer; the eastern part of this route is held by the Minaseer and Beni Yas, and the western part by the Al-Morra. No hills are met with on the way and the only wadis are Al-Sakr and Al-Sohba.

The Sabkheh or Sabkheh Matta, as it is sometimes called, is a marshy tract or wady about forty miles in breadth, commencing from the vicinity of the Wady Yabreen and entering the Persian Gulf between Long. 51° 50′ and Long. 52° 50′, and Lat. 24°. In some parts it is a treacherous morass only to be crossed at the beaten tracks, and it is said that should the camel miss the path he becomes engulfed in the mud. This Sabkheh is, according to Sprenger, the Sarkoe of Ptolemy, the word "Sarkoe" being a

lapsus pennæ, or perchance a copyist's error for "Sabkoe." This identification is an important one and is in all probability correct. According to the concurrent testimony of all the Shaikhs and best informed persons I have spoken to on the subject, the Sabkheh Matta is the geographical boundary between Al-Hasar and Oamn, and has been so considered from time immemorial.

The watershed of Al-Aridh and Yemama appears to lie towards the south-east, the Wady Hanifa and all other wadis converging towards Al-Raudha, where they unite in the Wady al-Sohba, which falls into the Persian Gulf just above the Sabkheh Matta, probably Khor al-Doan. The road is not entirely destitute of water, which can be obtained of brackish quality by digging.

South of Yemama and three days from Al-Hasar lies the fertile and well-watered valley of Yabreen, whose date groves are said to extend for several miles. Situate in the desert and beyond the limits of Nejd, it was formerly a populous settlement, but owing to malaria and other unhealthy conditions the inhabitants deserted it. The Arabs claim an antiquity of 800 years for it, but it has long since fallen to ruin, though some of the walls are still standing; it is also said that after heavy floods gold coins are sometimes picked up by the Bedouins. The dates belong to the Al-Morra and Dowas tribes, who visit Yabreen in September to collect the harvest, which is carried for sale to Nejd and Al-Hasar; it is also extensively reverted to by the neighbouring nomads with their flocks for the sake of pasturage. I regretted extremely that I could not prolong my stay at Beraimi, where I had been so hospitably received and where there was still much to be seen, and it was not without strong remonstrances and pressing invitations to stay longer that we were permitted to start. Shaikh Salim bin Mohammed al-Naimi offered to accompany me as far as the limits of Al-Jow, which offer I accepted with pleasure. Leaving at 3 p.m. we left Al-Beraimi by the same road by which we had come. After some miles a conical peak was pointed out on the left with Persian ruins, and it was getting dark when we reached Al-Kharoos, where we were to camp for the night and where Shaikh Salim took leave of us. The next day we

rode to Hail in three hours and halted for breakfast. It is forty miles from Al-Beraimi and it is here that the wilayet Sohar terminates.

Proceeding down the Wady Jezzi we arrived at nightfall at our camping ground, where the road branched off to Al-Gharabeh, the ruins of which lie about an hour and a-half distant, and which I had determined to visit. These ruins, which I had the opportunity of exploring, are the most considerable remains of antiquity to be found, I believe, in Oman. The hill is not high, perhaps about 250 feet, and is very steep and inaccessible, there being no semblance of a road. Around the summit, which is very irregular, are to be traced the outline of fortifications, extending for half a mile. The wall or rampart still stands in places from two to six feet high, and it is possible to observe the plan of the buildings at the highest point, though the greater part are an indistinguishable heap of ruins. Along the line of fortifications are, at intervals, small circular towers, several of which are still conspicuous. The walls have a uniform thickness of three feet and are constructed entirely of rough fragments of the rock, a white limestone, of which the upper part of the hill is composed; mortar appears to have been employed very sparingly, and I could detect only three places where it was used. There are two cisterns, one of which is quite at the summit and is in shape an oblong constructed of round pebbles cemented and plastered with mortar, the other being oval in shape but otherwise similar, and lower down the hill. Both these tanks are small and shallow and in such good condition that if cleaned out they might still be serviceable. I looked in vain for a well or for a tank that would serve for the storage of water.

Somewhat below the highest point is a low arch in the wall which was not improbably that of a gateway just over the road. There is one other arch and a tower still lower down, but it is made of stone placed together uncemented. Only a few yards of the roadway are traceable near the top, the rest of it is entirely obliterated, but it probably wound round the greater part of the hill, being very narrow and faced at the edge with curbstones. It was at the extreme summit, where the outline is best preserved, that the

residence of the commandant probably stood, but to judge from the heaps of stones *in situ* the building was apparently of no great extent.

Little doubt can be entertained, I think, as to the identification of Jebel Gharabeh or Felej al-Sook, by which name it is also known, with Jamsetjerd, the fortified port held by the Sassanians when the great religious change spread over Arabia in the seventh century of our era. At that period, according to Ross's *Annals of Oman*, Persia held the coasts of the Batineh from Sohar to Al-Rostak, the Marzaban or Governor residing at Jamsetjerd, a stronghold near Sohar. It was at this place that Mohammed's messengers and Hodhaifa interviewed the Marzaban, and on his refusal to accept Islam, Jamsetjerd was subsequently captured and destroyed. From its position and strength the importance of Jebel Gharabeh at that period must have been very great, and it was doubtless considered quite impregnable in those days of slings and bows, while it, of course, commanded the whole northern part of the Batineh. A few patches of cultivated ground are to be seen near the ruins, relieving the monotony of the ruggedness and desolation that surround them.

Visit to Dhofar in 1883.

In the autumn of 1883, when the revolt of the disaffected tribes had been quieted, I had occasion to visit the outlying provinces of Dhofar. I went on board H.M.S. *Philomel*, in which vessel Captain Lang, R.N., had kindly arranged to give me a passage there and back.

Passing Maseera Island we anchored off Mahot, in Ghubbet Hashish, on the evening of November 10th, and Captain Lang took me on shore at once. We landed on the north-east side of the island, where we were met by a number of women and slaves, the Arabs being evidently suspicious of our intentions. They were soon reassured, however, and we walked up to the Shaikh's house, but as it was getting late we soon returned on board.

On the 11th Lang and I again landed, but this time on the south side of the island, and had to make our way along a narrow path through the mangrove jungle of half a mile. Beyond the swamp the ground rises and the village is hidden from view, seaward, by the mangroves which fringe two-thirds of the island. There are about 150 houses, made oval or circular, of mangrove boughs and matting, bound together with ghadaf ropes; there are no stone houses. Water has to be brought from wells four miles away to the north and is carried in earthen vessels suspended in goatshair cloths slung on poles, the work being performed by female slaves, who are numerous here. I tasted the water, which was given me in half a cocoa-de-mer shell, and found it sweet but muddy. Shaikh Khasaif was not inclined to be very communicative, but from some of the Hikman and Ameen tribes I received some information concerning the tribes and the course of the wadis draining into the Bahr al-Hadri or Arabian Sea. There are no date palms or other trees on the island and no cultivation, but notwithstanding its wretched appearance there is much intercourse with Adam, and caravans are constantly arriving with dates for export. The trade is chiefly carried on with Zanzibar and Muscat, and the articles shipped here are dates, sharkfins, saltfish, tortoiseshell, and salt.

The insular position of Mahot gives it immunity from the attacks of Bedouins, and it was doubtless on this account that the island was chosen for a settlement, in spite of its want of water. The Shaikh told me he had expended much money in searching for water but all he had been able to procure on the island was very brackish. All the Arabs I spoke to on the subject here were unanimous in saying that the Ghubbet Hashish or "Grass Bay" was so called on account of the seaweed which grows on it, and not on account of the grass on shore, though it is certain that long grass grows abundantly in the neighbourhood and gives sustenance to a large number of sheep and camels. We left Mahot the same day and arrived at Merbat on the 14th. The commandant of the fort and three khojas came off and reported that everything was quiet. The stone houses here appear to be mostly warehouses and the

windows have a broad white border round them; they have been built with a view to resist Bedouin attacks.

In the afternoon, Lang and I went on shore and visited the tomb of Seyyid Zubair bin Abdulla al-Hashima, which is rather dilapidated, and the date is obliterated. The Khojas informed me they came from Bombay and did a good deal of trade with the Gara Bedouins in rice, cloth, metal-ware, etc., which they exchanged for frankincense, gums, and ghee. The frankincense brought by the Bedouins is of the three kinds, Nejdi, Rasami, and Rayzoni, the first named being the best. Some of the Boswellia trees grew within a distance of two hours, but in the hills they were much more abundant. The rocky shore and reefs at Merbat produce a plentiful supply of lobsters, prawns and crayfish. The Bedouins, they said, used formerly to give much annoyance, but since the Sultan of Muscat had built the fort and placed a small garrison there the Garas had quieted down and trade was flourishing.

We visited the tomb of Mohammed Ali, about half a mile from the fort; it is a large structure and kept in excellent order, an inscription inside giving the date 556 A.H. [A.D. 1160]. There are a few water holes close by from which the people draw part of their supply.

I also went with Lang in the galley to see the island of Jowamia, which is 199 yards from the beach and has a curious loose rock on the summit; the path, which is fifty feet above sea-level, being rough and steep. On the cliff on the mainland opposite are the ruins of a fort, but no inscription could be found there, and in this cliff is a double-storied cave, apparently excavated by the action of the sea; the lower storey is sixty feet deep, one hundred feet broad, and eight feet high.

At Merbat I met Ali bin Mohammed, an intelligent old man, who had been pilot to the *Palinurus* surveying brig, and afterwards to H.M.S. *Juno* in 1854. He showed me a paper given him by the Captain of the *Juno* testifying to his good service in protecting a midshipman and a seaman who had fallen into the hands of the Arabs, when in chase of a slave dhow. Leaving Merbat we

steamed on to Sallala, where we arrived at 2 p.m. on the 15th and landed two hours later. Lang and I walked to the Wali's house and then on to Al-Hafa. The Wali Suliman told me there was a truce between himself and the Garas, except at Thaka, where the Mashimi were still at feud with him. In the last fight, which took place about three months before, between Thaka and the hills, one man was killed on each side.

The grains cultivated about here were the dhurra or jowari and masaibili or bajri, and there was also much cotton. Heaps of sardines, called ohmia by the Arabs, were spread out to dry, previous to being given as fodder to cattle. When fresh caught the sardines are exposed in shallow oval stone pits in the sun until the oil exudes, which is then drained off in vessels placed to receive it and is used chiefly for mixing with lime to smear boats below the water line.

On returning on board in the evening we found the surf so heavy that the ship's boats proved of little use and we had to requisition native boats in order to reach the galley.

The next day I landed in company with several officers, who had arranged a shooting party. After visiting the Wali's house we separated and I proceeded to examine the ruins at Al-Balad. These ruins, the most extensive and interesting on the plains of Dhofar, cover a space of about two miles between Al-Hafa and Dareez, with an extreme breadth of nearly half a mile. The citadel, towers, and Jami mosque are still standing in part, and the town wall, Custom House, and ditch can be distinctly traced.

I examined first the Jami mosque, which is a large building with round and octagonal columns eight feet high, having capitals and pedestals. The Mehrab or Kibla is still standing, also the gateway, but the headstone, a huge block, six feet long and more than a foot and a-half square, was on the ground. Of the inscription on this stone, the first and least valuable line was legible enough, but the lower lines were battered and decayed and past reading. I had the block turned over and well washed, but no date was discernible.

The western portion of this area is covered by the ruins of the inferior and unwalled part of the old city, and but little interest attaches

to it, as there are few, if any, architectural or sculptured remains to be seen, and as the limestone blocks of which the houses were built have been blackened by age, it has a very sombre and dismal appearance.

The eastern part of the city, which was fortified in a quadrilateral form, the length being double the breadth, comprising the citadel and Custom House, is the most important and attractive, and it is here that we find the sculptured slabs, the ornamented capitals of columns, the texts of the Koran and other evidences of a civilized community. The defence consisted of a rampart and ditch on three sides, and the citadel stood on an eminence about 100 feet above the plain, and is still known as the Hishm. It is square with thick walls, and had two gates, one facing to the east and the other west ; there is a well thirty feet deep in the north-west bastion. The base of the Custom House is still standing, with the mortar quite hard and good and facing the east, and near it is a buma or tower, erected apparently to overawe the shipping.

The creek, however, which protects the city on the north and east side, deserves particular attention as it was doubtless the existence of this feature that determined the original selection of the site. This creek is about 100 yards at the widest part, five fathoms near the bar, and six fathoms deep near the town ; the water in it is perfectly fresh and used to supply the population. On the western side a moat had been dug as a defence, leading from the creek to the sea, and beyond this was an aqueduct or canal leading the water to irrigate the fields ; at the mouth is a sandy bar, and if this were removed the creek would again form an anchorage for native craft. Nothing could contribute more to the prosperity of Dhofar than the possession of a well-sheltered haven, for at present the roadstead is so unprotected, and the surf so violent, that the vessels calling here have to go on to Merbat, and trade is in consequence carried on under great disadvantages. The Arabs here assured me that in a hurricane that had occurred some thirty years before the plain had been flooded, sweeping camels, goats, and cattle out to sea and scouring the creek and clearing away the bar :

they also asserted that the scour had revealed a stout iron chain, stretching across the creek just opposite the Custom House. This chain, if the story be true, was no doubt intended to prevent vessels ascending the creek beyond the Custom House and thus contaminating the sweet water in the upper part, which supplied the town. The creek is full of reeds and rushes, the latter being termed Kusht by the Arabs, while the reeds are similar to those found at Aden. According to local tradition this city was founded by the Minjui Dynasty, which rose to the height of its power in the fifth century of the Hijrah and are the only remains of foreign occupation to be found anywhere on the southern or eastern coasts of Arabia. They are most certainly not the work of Arabs, whose simplicity of style and inartistic hand could never have produced the elaborate sculptures and ornamentations observable in the ruins of Al-Balad. It is the most eligible site for a town and port in the Dhofar district, next perhaps to that of Thaka or old Merbat, and it may have been the site of a town in remote ages long previous to the arrival of the Minjuis, but what name the Minjuis gave to their capital is now forgotten and has passed into oblivion.

After seeing the ruins, I took a walk westward in the country, which appeared fertile and well cultivated. The wells are shallow, the water being drawn up by camels, three or four of which may sometimes be seen working together, evidently well trained, as they make the turn at the end of the wells without guidance, as neither man nor boy were near them. There is a creek at Okoad, on the east side of which is a ruined village named Abkad, and the land between Okoad and Raysoot is occupied by the Beni Saeed.

On the next day, the 17th, I received a visit from the Kadhi of Dareez, Ahmed al-Hadal, also from five Shaikhs of the Katheeri, one of whom was Bukhait, an old man quite blind, after whom the Indian traders came up and gave me particulars of the trade of Dhofar. They informed me that the Garas had only frankincense and other gums, hides, and ghee to bring in, that the value of the former was three dollars per cwt., and that the quantity brought to Sallala on an average was 4,000 cwt. The cotton cloth imported

from India was chiefly black, but a certain quantity of white was also imported, but no other kind was in demand ; the annual amount was about 50,000 rupees. Rice, dates, and jowari are also imported. I was told that the Katheeris were all on good terms with the Wali and paid two and a-half per cent. on the crops. The Bedouins pay a tax of one dollar on five camels, and give one goat out of twenty. In the afternoon I went to see the ruins of Robat, which I found to be very extensive. The town must have been a very populous one from the numerous walls of houses and enclosures in all directions, and I noticed a large square well of excellent masonry and quite dry. The burial ground remains in wonderful preservation, considering the great age of the interments, which must be nearly 1,000 years old. Two or three of the tombs were Minjuis, and one of them bore the date 411 A.H. [A.D. 1020]. Tombs of the Yemen Sultans were common, one of which had two beautifully carved marble stones ; on one of these was the representation of a lamp suspended by a chain, while on the other stone three lamps were carved. The old mosque had no date, but the new one was dated 1233 A.H. [A.D. 1817]. The country between Sallala and Robat is arable, with plenty of grass and cotton, the soil being light and sandy.

Sunday, November 18th.—The Kadhi of Dareez came to-day and I endeavoured to learn from him something of its history. He informed me that the population of Dareez was about 250, and that it was an old capital. He said the Shereefs and Seyyids had looked after the Gara flocks and herds on the plains and are the " go-between " and arbitrators in all matters, being reverenced as holy and pious men. He did not appear to know much of the history of Dhofar, but I was fortunately able to obtain an old manuscript from Shaikh Abdul Rahman, whose family had furnished the Khadhis of Hafa for generations, but it was with great reluctance that he consented to part with it, but he eventually did so for twenty dollars. After distributing a few presents we sailed to Merbat, where we anchored for the night.

November 19th.—Leaving Merbat we passed Jinjelly and Sidha, where there is a creek and hamlet, and on the following day reached

Hellaniya, the largest and only inhabited island of the Kooria Mooria group. I walked with Lang to the huts, which are of the most primitive description, generally oval or round, six feet in diameter and three or four feet high, built of loose stones, with a scanty roofing of mats laid over sticks and fish bones and gorgonias, with barely room to sit upright. In these wretched habitations, and in caves at certain seasons, these islanders live, subsisting on fish, shellfish, and goats' milk, occasionally exchanging their dried fish for dates and rice with passing dhows. The population numbered thirty-six, and consisted of five men, twenty women, and eleven children; two of the women are of the Beni Khalfan tribe and are considered the queens of the island. The headman is Hamed bin Mubarek, the only person who can speak Arabic, the rest speaking Mahra, and he told me that the people all came from the opposite coast, Merbat and Hasek. He had many papers and said that the telegraph clerk, M. H. Nicholas, took away all the others when the station was abandoned in 1861. They fish entirely with the hook and possess neither boats, canoes nor nets. There are three or four wells on the island, and on the east side the ruins of a town stood, thus showing that it once contained a larger population. Hamed bin Mubarek complained that the Arab boats from the Pirate coast, particularly Debaye and Ajman, had molested and robbed them. Between 200 and 300 goats were on the island, some being quite wild, while some were attended by women and children. They were much gratified by being given a little sugar, rice, tobacco, and cotton cloth.

On the morning of the 22nd we were off Ras Sherbetat, with a somewhat heavy confused sea and going four knots, with wind and current still against us; Sherbetat was formerly considered the boundary between the Mahra and Jenebeh tribes. H.M.S. *Philomel* arrived at Muscat on the 27th at 8 a.m.

In the following year, the Government of India having sanctioned the presentation of gifts to the Sultan of Kisheen and others in connection with the hospitality shown by them to the crew of the SS. *Airy*, which had been wrecked near Cape Fartak, I left

Muscat for that port in H.M.S. *Dragon,* in which Captain Anson had kindly arranged to give me a passage on December 10th, 1884. On anchoring at Kisheen on the 15th, Captain Anson and I walked up to the house of Ali bin Abdulla bin Salim bin Towari al-Afreer, who received us very civilly. After thanking him for the protection given and kindness shown to the sailors of the *Airy* I gave the present, consisting of a gold-mounted dagger and other articles. The Sultan replied that he was glad that his action had merited the notice of the Government, and also stated that his rule extended along the coast from Mesenat to Ras Tarbat Ali, and promised that shipwrecked crews of European nationality would always find safety and hospitality among his people. Sultan Ali appeared to be rather feeble and decrepit, and could not converse in Arabic; an old Kadhi spoke for him and was evidently the real ruler. Abdulla bin Mohammed, the man who had first succoured the *Airy* crew, arrived at Kisheen during the interview and immediately began to rub noses with the Sultan and other notables present. This ceremony consists in taking each other by the right hand and then rubbing noses together, sniffing audibly all the time.

Kisheen is a miserable town of 200 mud houses, built on the sand, and has ten mosques, some with minarets. Most of the food supply comes from Bombay and Muscat, but there are no Indian traders; the chief exports are frankincense, myrrh, cattle and fish maws.

Tuesday, December 16th.—Weighed at 5.30 a.m. and reached Saihoot at 10, where a visit was paid to the young Sultan, Saad bin Salim, who was in charge of the town during the absence of the Governor, Sultan Mohammed bin Omar; the latter is the son of the last Sultan of Kisheen, Omar bin Towari, who was visited by Captain Haines. Mohammed bin Omar was the rightful successor, but being very young at his father's death, the succession passed on to Sultan Ali bin Abdulla, the present Sultan.

Saihoot is a large straggling town containing 250 houses and about 2,000 people, a very large proportion of whom are negroes. There are many mosques with minarets, water is good and plentiful,

and there are several curious tanks for people to draw from. I noticed public scales in the market, where frankincense and howair, or wild indigo, is weighed; there are four Banian traders from Cutch here, who carry on a thriving trade. The exports are frankincense, salt fish, barley, sardine oil, and sharkfins, while the imports are considerable, as Saihoot supplies the population of the Wady Maseela.

Leaving Saihoot, we steamed to the westward for a few miles, to look at the Wady Maseela, which has a less imposing appearance than I had expected, the west bank of which is more lofty than the east, and the chart does not appear to show the hill ranges correctly.

In the second century after Christ, when the great Azdite immigration from the Yemen to Oman took place, the first stage of the Azdites' march from Mareb was to go down the Wady Maseela to Saihoot, where the families were put into boats and taken to Kilhat, from whence they proceeded to their destination. In Ross's *Annals of Oman*, the name of the port of embarkation is given as Raysoot, but there is no doubt that Saihoot is the place intended.

Changing course here, the *Dragon* steamed back towards Ras Fartak, on the western side of which is a fishing village named Khasad, a place formerly much frequented by Zanzibar dhows for landing cargoes of slaves, intended for the Hadhramaut market.

The Governor of Khasad resides at Woodi, one of the chief towns of the Mahras, which lies five miles distant inland. I landed at Khasad in a sambook and went up to the Shaikh's house; this hamlet is wretchedly poor and has only fifty inhabitants, though several large vessels belonging to Woodi anchor here.

Below the promontory of Ras Fartak is a low point called Hishm, from the remains of an ancient fort, on the top of which promontory only the site can be traced; a huge boulder that has fallen from above, at the extremity, is known as Mohrim.

Ras Fartak is the most salient and remarkable natural feature on the southern coast of Arabia. On the western side the rise is somewhat gradual, the range behind the maritime plain of Kisheen coming to a sudden termination at the point, where the coast turns

abruptly to the north and presents to the eastward a perpendicular escarpment, 2,500 feet in height and six miles in length, the cliff rising sheer from the sea to the summit; but though apparently a smooth precipice, it is, in fact, a series of narrow terraces, or ledges, corresponding with the strata, chiefly horizontal, but also at all angles. This grand headland is indented or honeycombed with numerous caves inhabited by Mahras, who gain a precarious livelihood by fishing; descending to the lower terraces and rigging out lines suspended from ledges of rock projecting over the sea. It is a dangerous occupation, and several are said to perish annually by falling off into the sea below. At night the fires lighted by the natives give the promontory a singular appearance, it is the only indication of the cliff being inhabited as the caves are invisible during the day time.

At Nishton, where the *Dragon* next anchored, I found one of the headmen to be Salim bin Mubarek, the Mahra who had rescued and fed the crew of the SS. *Knight of Bath* in June, 1883, near Ras Saukira. The old man expressed the deep gratitude he felt for the generous treatment he had received from the owners of the vessel, and for the attention shown him in Bombay, observing that from being a poor fisherman he had become a merchant and a headman of his village. I ascertained later that the fame of Salim bin Mubarek's good fortune had spread everywhere along the coast, and it may be expected that the liberality shown in his case, and that of the SS. *Airy*, may have the effect of inducing the Arabs to assist and befriend any European who may happen to be wrecked on the shore of Southern Arabia. The *Airy* appears to have struck on a bank or reef off the point of Nishton Bay, in about two fathoms, and to have subsequently rolled off into deeper water, but still showing the brass work of the cylinders. Salim bin Mubarek told me that he was absent from Nishton when the *Airy* struck. The two other muccadums or headmen of Nishton, Mohammed and Moosa, received their present at the same time as Shaikh Awadh of Dhaboot, who had taken charge of the sailors after the latter had left Nishton.

At Dhaboot, where we anchored for the night, there is a large square house or fort where the sailors were lodged during their stay; the village is small but has a good water supply.

December 18th.—Steamed on to Damkot, a small village of 100 mat huts, situated at the mouth of a gorge called Showeyta. There is a lake or lagoon, which is fed by the water flowing down the ravine, but in the lower part the water is brackish. Anson took me ashore in his galley and we walked up to the Shaikh's house. The Shaikh or muccadum himself was absent and his *locum tenens* was very old and decrepit, but said he remembered the boats of the *Palinurus* being engaged in the survey of the coast, and had seen no ships at Damkot since then, and that none of his people had ever seen a steamer before. The old man had given me a list of the Mahra tribes and the route from Gheitha to Tereem. The burial ground is ancient and lies between the town and the sea, is very extensive, and believed to be pre-Islamitic. There is some little trade, but the people are very poor, possessing a few camels, goats and cattle, the exports being frankincense, ghee, and sardine oil.

Passing Ras Shajr, which marks the southern limit of the territory of the Sultan of Muscat, the *Dragon* arrived at Sallala and anchored off there on December 19th, 1884. I landed with Anson to interview the Wali, who said he was now at peace with Funkhor, the Chief of the Mashimi Garas, and that the latter had paid all the dues demanded of him. None of the Indian traders were at Sallala, having all gone to Merbat on business, so I went with Anson to have a look at the ruins of Al-Balad and to photograph them, and took eight plates of the principal features, inscriptions, etc., which were afterwards developed at Muscat. I particularly examined the cemetery for tombs of the Minjuis, but could find none. Many graves were here of the twelfth century of the Hijrah, but none of the Minjuis or Haboodhi periods appear to have survived.

Leaving Sallala the same evening, we steamed on to Dareez, where I landed the next day. I interviewed here the old Kadhi, Seyyid Ahmed, who gave me some information about the Garas and about the Samiri. He informed me that the Samiri was a con-

verted Kafir and it was through his sanctity Dhofar was first blessed with rain; before this time the water of heaven had never fallen. His tomb was now a ziarat or shrine, and visited by all sorts and conditions of men, and his name was included with the other Ameers, Anbias and Ulemas, and was prayed to whenever rain was required by the people of the district.

The tomb of the Al-Samiri lies about half a mile from the sea and is enclosed by an unroofed wall of mud and stones twenty-five feet by ten, the grave being eighteen feet by four, lying north and south, with a broken headstone of black basalt or limestone. The inscription is imperfect, the lower part, bearing the date, has disappeared, while at the foot of the tomb is a small cavity for holding oil, the lamp being kept lighted throughout the year by the devotees. The roof of the building collapsed many years ago, but last year a slave named Saeed saw the saint in a dream and was warned that if the tomb was left exposed to the sun the whole district would be parched for want of rain; a subscription was therefore raised and some repairs were effected, but sufficient funds to renew the roof were not available. The most complete account of this saint, whose tomb is the principal shrine in Oman, is that given in Mr. W. Logan's *Malabar*, and it may be interesting to give briefly the events in connection with the famous conversion of the Samiri to Islam. The last King of Cranganore, whose name was Chereman Perimal, dreamed one night that the full moon appeared on the night of the new moon, and that when at the meridian it split into two, one half descending to the foot of the hill, where the halves joined and then set. Some time afterwards a ship, returning with Moslem pilgrims from the Persian Gulf to Ceylon, anchored at Cranganore. In an audience given by the King, one of the pilgrims, Shaikh Soorij al-Deen, improved the occasion by relating the story of Mohammed slipping the moon up his sleeve. The King was much interested and secretly informed the Shaikh of his desire to embrace the faith. Touching at Cranganore again, on his return journey, the Shaikh was secretly instructed by the King to have a ship prepared for a voyage, and after eight days embarked in the vessel with the Shaikh

and his companions for Shihr on the Arabian coast. From Shihr, King Perimal proceeded to Dhofar, where he settled, but after some years resolved to return to India to convert his people, but was seized with a fatal illness. Before he died he urged his companions, Malik bin Deenar and others, to carry out his designs and propagate the faith in Malabar.

The dates of these occurrences appear to be fairly well established. King Chereman Perimal left India in 210 A.H. [25th August, A.D. 825], remained at Shihr two years, reached Dhofar in 212 A.H. [A.D. 827], and died there in 216 A.H. [A.D. 831]. On his arrival at Shihr, King Perimal is said to have taken the name of Abdul Rahman, but how and where he obtained the appellation of Al-Samiri by the Arabs is somewhat obscure. The word signifies "Calf," and is applied to the worshippers of the cow, and it probably has reference to Perimal being of the Hindoo religion before his conversion. It has been confounded with the word Zamorin, the title given by the Portuguese to the King of Calicut, but the latter word is of Sanscrit derivation.

From Dareez we proceeded to Thaka, where I landed in a surf boat, and interviewed Seyyid Abdulla, the brother of the Shaikh Seyyid Alowi, who was absent in the hills; the ancestor of these Seyyids was Abu Bekr, who came from Ainat in Hadhramaut. Thaka at this time contained forty houses and 200 inhabitants, but it appeared to be rapidly falling to ruins. I was only able to give a cursory look at the creeks and the interesting ancient ruins in the neighbourhood, much regretting that I had not the leisure to examine them more thoroughly. The three creeks here are Khors Thaka, Seive, and Reiri, the last being the largest, and forming in ancient times, no doubt, the haven of the city. Before leaving, I took the opportunity to inspect the oldest and most revered shrine at Thaka, that of Wali Afeef, who is regarded as a patriarch; the headstone bears the date 309 A.H. [A.D. 921], and, having been broken in two, has been bored and mended with string.

Our next halt was at Merbat, where we anchored at 2 p.m. After receiving the Belooch Commandant and Indian traders on

board, I went on shore with Anson and looked at the ruins of the old fort, which was built in 1806 by the old pirate Mohammed Akil, who lies buried here, and I took photographs of the town and Mahra groups. Shaikh Lohaih of Nishton, who had been absent when we called there, was found living at Merbat, and I took the occasion to thank him for his humane conduct with regard to the sailors of the *Airy*. We had made arrangements with the Gara Shaikh, Mohammed bin Bukhail, to provide camels for a shooting party the next day. The population here may be about 300 souls. Having been able to procure a few saplings of the Boswellia or frankincense tree here, I took them with me to plant at Muscat and they were still growing when I left that town a few years later.

Tuesday, December 23rd.—We weighed from Merbat and after passing Khor Hamsa at 7 o'clock and Ras Kaukeri or Jinjeri, 20 miles, we sighted Ras Noos, near which is Kabr Hood, or Kabr Saleh bin Hood, according to some. The similitude of this name of the shrine to that of the great mountain, Jebel Habrood, overhanging it, gives rise to the idea that one of the names may have originated the other. Possibly the name of the mountain may have suggested the myth of the Prophet's tomb or it may be that Habrood is merely a corruption of Kabr Hood.

The coast between Ras Merbat and Hasek is rocky, sterile, and uninhabited, while the ancient town of Hasek is now completely a ruin and deserted. A few men were seen hiding among the rocks, who would not come forward at first, but were at length reassured and came up. They said they were Mashimi Garas and were pasturing goats and camels, and could not give any information about the history of the place, except that the town was sacked by the pirates, who carried off the women and children into slavery. The ruins are on the left bank of the wady, about a mile from the sea, and the outline of the town, which was unwalled, is still clearly traceable. The houses were small and built of dark limestone blocks cemented with mud, and the best preserved buildings are the mosques, the site of a blacksmith's forge, and a goldsmith's shop, all pointed out to me by the Arabs; there are also two circular

watch towers on high pinnacles, one on each bank, commanding the town, but no fresh water was procurable within a mile of the ruins. Sook Hasek is situate near the beach at Ras Hasek, for the convenience of the shipping.

At the Island of Hellaniya, which we next visited, I landed with Captain Anson, and found the state of affairs practically the same as on the previous visit in 1883. The people crowded round to kiss hands, recognizing at once those of us who had been in the *Philomel.* They had no complaints and said the Persian Gulf Arabs had not molested them since last year, but the population had diminished by two, there being now five men, twelve boys, and seventeen females, all of whose names I caused to be taken down. The men asked for fish hooks and told me that the baskets they used for fishing were made of acacia twigs and were called gagoor. Anson told me he had counted 200 graves in the old burial ground. Went on board at noon and sailed for Ras Karwaw, which we reached at 4 p.m. The people came down to meet us on the beach and were very friendly; they admitted, however, that they had keenly watched our approach from behind the rocks and were in hopes of our being wrecked and of their being able to loot the ship, but were disappointed when they saw the ship was safe. The people here were all Jenebeh and said they always came here to pasture their animals in the cold season and returned eastward, as the date harvest approached, for the Keith or summer; they all acknowledge Saif bin Hamid as their Temeemeh or chief Shaikh. Many Mahra and Awamir were roaming about inland not far off, but the Mahra limit was reckoned to be at Ras Jezaniya, the local name for the Ras Showaniya of the chart, the latter name not being known to the Bedouins.

Christmas Day, December 25th.—Went on shore again and conversed with the Jenebeh headman, who gave me a list of places between Rekoot and Ras Madraka, and who said there was a large valley, called Wady Einana, to the east of Saukira, debouching at Ghaiza not far from Ghadiza, where the crew of the *Knight of the Bath* were picked up. In reply to my enquiry he said the Jenebeh

never ventured as far west as Hasek. This Wady Einana runs up three days' journey and curves to the west, and beyond is a range of low hills. In the afternoon I walked with Anson up to Lake Lokek, which is a mile and a-half long and is supplied by the Wady Ghazalet; the water is brackish at the lower part and the lake is full of fish, regaling on which are many waterfowl, cormorants, herons, etc.

APPENDIX.

A SLIGHT SKETCH OF COLONEL S. B. MILES' TRAVELS IN MESOPOTAMIA FROM DECEMBER, 1879, TO APRIL, 1880.

JOURNEY FROM BAGHDAD TO MOSUL.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14th, 1879.—Left the Residency at 11.30 a.m. with Robertson and Halliday, who rode out with me a short way. After riding about twenty miles we passed a small hamlet called Jedida, then another called Saada, or as some said Jenani (a khan or caravanserai and garden). Seven miles further we came to a village named Yangijeh, where I found my tent ready pitched. The road, or rather track, was quite level all the way and the country generally bare and uncultivated. The ducts leading out from the Khalis Canal for irrigation are passed at several points over culverts and wooden bridges, which makes the supply of water plentiful; we arrived at 6.30 p.m.

December 15th.—Started at sunrise and passed Jerdideh, a small hamlet, then Munsoor (a Saint's tomb and garden), and afterwards Sirajeke, a village with date groves, while at a little before sunset we came to Delli Abbas, where we halted for the night. The village stands on the bank of the Khalis, which is crossed by a bridge with two arches, whose headman is a Juzbushi, or Jemidar of police; also it has two khans. The path runs along the right bank of the Khalis nearly the whole way and we have to cross many irrigants. As we rode along we saw but few signs of cultivation, palms being scanty; the distance travelled was about twenty miles, during which my horse fell down and I had to exchange it for another, paying £20.

December 16th.—Started early and were now escorted by a janissary and ten Circassians, who were well mounted and armed. The country was almost devoid of pasture until we reached Khan Soweyma, where we found a patrol stationed to guard the road against Kurd robbers. To the village we now ascend the Hareen Pass, which is about 500 or 600 feet high and gives a fine view over the surrounding country, the road being fairly good. The road now runs by the side of the Hareen Canal, which issues from the Dijalish at Zazibut, the Hareen being here crossed by a good bridge with two arches. Then we were met by an escort of the Kindih of Kara Teppeh, and soon after a Yazbashi from Kerkook appeared with his party to istikbal us. During the day we marched about twenty-one miles and reached Kara Teppeh about sunset, whose inhabitants are solely engaged in agriculture, but at certain times there is said to be quite an influx of Persians. Here we halted for the night.

Wednesday, December 17th.—Left Kara Teppeh at 8.30 a.m., the Mudir accompanying us some distance. The road was generally stony and undulating with pebbly tracks. At 11 a.m. we crossed the Kumana, a reedy stream, by a bridge, and a little further on we came to another stream, while to the left was a flat-topped hill called Eiki Kifri. Reached Kifri at 4 p.m., having ridden about twenty-two miles.

Thursday, December 18th.—The road to-day lay north-east, along the west side of the range under which Kifri lies. At 4 p.m. we arrived at Tooz Khurmati, where the Mudir came out to meet us. There is a canal here, the water being sulphurous and nasty and almost undrinkable, also the dates are uneatable, and the heat in summer is said to be insupportable. There are two very ancient ruins here, probably Sassanian or Assyrian, which are now called "The Five Fingers," from as many fragments of wall remaining standing. The town is distant twenty-six miles from Kifri, which it much resembles but is smaller and unwalled. It has a good market with 110 shops, of which fourteen are Jewish.

Friday, December 19th.—Leaving Tooz Khurmati early, before camp was struck, I rode off to visit the old Sassanian fort, which is

on an isolated and very steep hill on the edge of the gap through which the River Kara flows and commands a beautiful view of the country between Kifri and Kerkook, as well as the road to Daoodia. The rock seems admirably adapted for a hill fort, but only a fragment of a wall is now left and the remains of building inside ; there is an archway, probably of the door, and peepholes still left, but the space on the summit inside is very small. The hill is difficult to climb and must have been almost inaccessible to a storming party, while underneath are visible some saltpans, the brine being drawn from a deep well. I was obliged to refrain from a visit to " The Five Fingers " from want of time, but antiquities are often found in this neighbourhood and taken to Baghdad for sale. Near Taoogh the stream supplying it is crossed, bearing the same name, and has a stony bed ; indeed the whole plain to-day was very pebbly. Reached Taoogh at 3 p.m., having travelled eighteen miles. The town is ruled by a Jemidar and has only a few shops, the inhabitants being all Kurds.

Saturday, December 20th.—Our stay at Taoogh was a continued discomfort to us, as we had no proper lodgings and it was impossible to pitch the tents owing to the rainstorm which blew the whole time. My lodging was a coffee-shop and a donkey stable combined, and though it had been swept and garnished for my comfort the perfume of its former occupants remained, although it was open to the four winds of heaven and was cold and draughty. Near Taoogh are several tombs which are much frequented by the devout and are surrounded by graves, one being of the Imam Ahmed, near which is an olive tree covered with fragments of garments. Another tomb, that of the Imam Mohammed, is visited by the sick and ailing from all directions. The road to Kerkook, which we reached at 4 p.m., was barren and undulating, and we had a heavy rainstorm all the way. Twelve miles further on we reached Taza Khorminthe, a small hamlet of fifty houses, with gardens, vines and dates. After Taza Khorminthe we came to Tissin, and a mile and a-half further on to Kerkook, the ancient name of which was Corcura or Demetrious. Near Tissin we were istikballed by the Chief of Kerkook, who rode

with us to his town and lodged us in a nice house near the Serai. The new Wali or Governor of Kerkook had not yet arrived, and I was informed that the Ferek commanding the troops was in charge. He sent me a dinner and in reply to my intimation that I intended to call said he would come himself first.

Sunday, December 21st.—The General and Acting Pasha paid me a visit, according to arrangements, at 10 o'clock, and soon after he left the Secretary came, then three Chaldean priests and some Christian merchants dropped in and had some talk. The Christians in the district have all gone over to Rome, and call themselves Chaldeans, not Nestorians, and knew nothing of the latter under Mar Suliman and had no relations with them. The Chaldeans number about 150 families here, have three churches, one of which is said to be of great antiquity, about 1,500 years old, and were quite contented with Turkish rule and had nothing to complain of. The chief productions are wool and tragacanth, the annual export of wool being 120,000 maunds. The Secretary told me that in view of the scarcity of grain, a small supply had been already procured from Diarbekr, but that the low state of the finances prevented the Wali from giving much assistance to the poor. In the afternoon I returned the visit of the Ferek and Acting Wali at his office in the barracks, and he told me during our conversation that he had 6,000 men in his division, including the districts of Sulimania and Rawandooz; I also learnt from him that Obeydullah had sent in his submission through his son, Abda Kadir. After taking leave, I went over the town and bazaar lower down the citadel hill, under which a part of the town is built to the south-east, where the Wali's private house stands. The bazaar is good, well stocked, and thronged with people; part of it is covered in with groined arches of bricks and occupied by cloth merchants. The streets are narrow and have a deep ditch running down the centre, now full of mud and water, but the houses seem generally poor and squalid. The mound on which the so-called citadel, which I can only describe as a rampart wall, is built is about one and a-quarter miles round and 150 feet high at most, being very steep and approached by a ramp,

and quite commands the town. At the bottom runs a river crossed by a bridge of eleven arches, built in A.D. 1292, as the inscription on it states. In the afternoon I paid a visit to the Matran or bishop, who happened to be in the church performing evening service, and while awaiting his return I was given the opportunity of examining his books in the library, which one of the priests showed me. There were some old Chaldean manuscripts, one of them, a New Testament, 150 years old, was written for use in the church, rudely illuminated, but in a dilapidated condition. Another was a Tarrath or Pentateuch of about the same age, the third was a history of the Chaldeans in the country by a priest named Hezkiel, giving an account of the persecution by Shapor and the distribution of the churches and dioceses at that period; this MS. was said to be 1,200 years old, but did not appear to me to be more than 400, and was defective. The bishop was a hard-featured man of about sixty, who said he was born at Mosul and had lived forty-seven years at Kerkook.

Monday, December 22nd.—Started at 3.15 a.m., the Turkish Allai Beg escorting us out for a mile. After one hour we left the road to see the sulphur fires, which lie a little to the right. The first spot we visited was in a hollow under a low eminence and covered, perhaps, fifty square yards of ground, the flames from which rose to a height of a few inches only, but from many different points, wherever, indeed, the soil is stirred up by a sword or stick; the fire leaves a white incrustation, which is soft and brittle, probably sulphate of lime, but with the exception of this there is nothing peculiar in the appearance of the ground; but the smell was plain enough, and the flames had sufficient heat to make one comfortably warm on a raw morning. Although the sulphur in this district is ready to hand for the powder mills at Kerkook, the superstitious fears of the Moslems prevent it being used for that purpose, as the ground hereabout is holy and venerated on account of the Imam Baba Gurpeer, and the sulphur required has to be brought from Mosul and Arbela. I was told that on a Wednesday in March every year the people of Kerkook, to the number of 3,000 or 4,000, came out to the spot and sacrificed a goat or kid and say certain prayers

in honour of the Imam Baba Gurpeer, but they could not tell me precisely how they fixed the day, but it was always in March and must be a Wednesday ; this is a curious remnant of the old Zoroastrian religion, which has survived for thirteen centuries. A hundred yards away is another sulphur fire in a deeper hollow, but the heavy rains of the day before had put the flames out. On regaining the road we soon came upon some naphtha springs, ten in number ; the pits being dug some depth in the ground, the naphtha looking like thick oil oozes from the rock very slowly, and takes some time to collect in a pool at the bottom. These naphtha springs are the property of a family at Kerkook, who are said to have enjoyed the monopoly for many centuries, the proprietors charging two or three rupees for every skinful carried off, the proceeds from which has now made the family the richest in Kerkook, while the Turkish Government receives absolutely nothing from this source. After three hours the country becomes much more hilly and broken than we had yet seen, and ranges are to be seen to the east and north, the road being undulating throughout. After crossing a steep pass we came upon three Karezes, which are the first I observed since leaving Baghdad. On the other side of the Khofrre [*sic*] Su we were met by the Mudir of the town with four of the chief merchants and a guard who came to meet us. We crossed the high and remarkable bridge which gives the name to the place, under which the water forms a rushing cataract, and for a lodging we were given the bridge-house overlooking the stream on the opposite side. Alton Kufri is built on an island, formed by the bifurcation of the stream, which is sufficiently high above the other bank to escape an inundation, and contains about 200 houses and about 3,000 inhabitants. The cultivators who raise the wheat do not reside in the town but occupy a small hamlet out in the country. Baghdad is chiefly supplied with corn from Alton Kufri, and 20,000 to 30,000 layhan of wheat are annually sent down from here on rafts, 1,600 to 2,000 being required, which are constructed here for this purpose. Other articles sent down on these poplar rafts are wood, honey, oak and raisins. The country around is extremely fertile and could produce

much more than it does at present. The bridge was built about 480 years ago by Sultan Murad. This river often rises to the top of the smallest arch, and the bridge owes its preservation to the centre arch, which is very high and strongly built to resist heavy floods. A Yazbashi arrived to-day from Arbil to relieve our former escort, which returns to Kerkook to-morrow.

Tuesday, December 23rd.—I sent off the baggage mules two and a-half hours before sunrise and started ourselves as soon as that luminary became visible. We crossed the other branch of the lesser Zab by a bridge of stone, and shortly afterwards passed a flour mill to the left, turned by an overshot water wheel on a small brook. The country becomes more undulating, the streams of water more frequent, and the inhabitants, sheep, and goats more numerous as we go on. The country is, in fact, extensively cultivated and forms a marked contrast to the land we have passed through, where hardly a tree or shrub, except the orchards or gardens, is to be seen. After travelling ten miles we passed several artificial mounds, one of which, called Bashhisch, I ascended and found on the top a square building. As we passed Arbil we met the Kaimakan and the Commandant of the troops coming out to istikbal us; we then proceeded through the part of the town below the hill to the ramp Gabriel, and ascended to the gate of the citadel, and were lodged in the Serai, the gate below which is approached by a triple ramp. There are 1,600 houses below and 700 above, and the water is supplied by a kariz, which runs near the town and is very ancient; the hill platform is very similar to that at Kerkook and is probably artificial, while the altitude is not equal to that of Kerkook and may be 100 feet. There is only one well in the citadel, about thirty metres deep, the water being used at present for the hummam or hot bath. In the lower town there are about 200 Jewish families but no Christian ones. A fine old arch stands outside the lower town, connected with a mosque, which arch is said to have been built about 500 years ago; this and other remains show that Arbil was formerly a place of greater size and importance; the minaret of the mosque is a facsimile of the one at Taoogh. There are two gates,

but the hill is not fortified, as what appears to be the rampart is only the outside of the houses built on the brow of the platform and there are no guns except a few old Turkish brass pieces, lying on the ground. The houses are of brick cemented with lime, there being seven limekilns in the locality. Near the road I noticed a large sheet of brick masonry in the mound, which corroborated my conjecture that the mound was artificial; indeed the shape of it is so symmetrical, and the sides so steep, that it could not have retained its original form for so many centuries without a strong support of brickwork, of which it is no doubt entirely composed. From this hill I gazed over the great plain, which stretches out for many miles, where the famous battle between Alexander the Great and Darius took place in 331 B.C., and to this day arrowheads and other relics of the battle are frequently found; in fact, I had many brought to me, and I also procured a curious cuneiform inscription on marble.

Wednesday, December 24th.—Started at sunrise, the Kaimakan escorting us some way. There was a dense mist over the town below, and it was quite impossible to see anything around us for some time after the sun rose, which made the Kaimakan remark that the people were almost as much pleased at it as if the rain had fallen. We turned off the road to visit the Christian village of Ankawa, where there are two churches and six priests, but no Ankawans or Arabs, the houses of which number 150. The first church I entered was that of St. John, which was nothing but a long, narrow room, with an altar on a raised dais at one end; everything was very plain, but there were about a dozen pictures in it hung on the walls and standing on the altar, two or three of the Virgin, one of St. Joseph, and one of St. Dominica, also one remarkable picture of Jonah, with a number of fish with their heads out of water, but there were no seats in the church, and the doorways were so low that one had to stoop double to get in. The other church was dedicated to St. George and was said to be very ancient; several marble slabs were let into the walls having Chaldean inscriptions on them giving a record of repairs that had been done to the church at various periods, while the altar was in a separate enclosure or room, in which were

pictures of sorts, and in the body of the church there were about fifty more. Some of these had been presented by the Roman Catholic missionaries at Mosul and others had been bought by the Patriarch Yusof, when he was at Rome. The people here seemed to be excessively poor and the priests even had to work at the plough, while I heard many complaints about rigorous taxation and of the Arabs being allowed to plunder them with impunity. After rejoining the road, we passed two mounds, one of which was called Taflowa, with a modern building on it, said to have been a stronghold of the Kurds against the Tye Arabs. The country hereabouts was undulating, well watered, and cultivated, with small Kurdish villages or hamlets. We came at last to the River Zab and found the baggage already unladen, preparatory to being taken across, which took us hours, and required five or six trips in two ferry boats, which were quaintly-shaped affairs but well adapted for the purpose and were well managed. The village at which we halted was a mile and a-half further down the river, and was called Kallek. The old escort was relieved to-day by a new one, and the Yazbashi informed us that the Wali of Mosul was to leave to-day and that we should probably meet him on the way. However, we missed him on the road, and as he did not return to Mosul during my stay there I never met him. Kallek consists of six houses and a post-house, and in this latter, which was a long low room, quite bare and very dirty, the whole of our party had to rest for the night, but the shelter, wretched as it was, proved very acceptable, as during the night the snow fell heavily and we set off in the morning in a blinding snowstorm under a dark and gloomy sky, but thankful for having crossed the Zab river before the storm came on. The snow soon lay thick on the ground and our progress was so slow that we were obliged to halt at a Christian village about halfway to Mosul, and as there was no house available I was accommodated in the church, where the whole community collected as soon as they heard the object of my mission. The next morning we started as early as we could to wade through the snow, which was now more than two feet deep, and at Nineveh I met Mr. Russell, the Vice-Consul, who had been good enough to ride out to escort me to Mosul.

Journey from Mosul to Al-Kosh.

February 17th, 1880.—Left Mosul in company with Mr. Russell at 2 p.m. and arrived at 4 o'clock at Tilkeyf, where we were istikballed by a party of priests and people with flags and cymbals, making a horrible din, who asked permission to sacrifice a calf and sheep on the road in front of us, but this was, of course, declined. We put up in the post-house and visited first the churches, which form three sides of a square, the open part in the centre being used as a church-yard. The church at the end opposite the gateway is dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, the one on the right is Kariakos, while the one on the left is that of the Miriam Adhra, or the Virgin Mary; these churches are all large and well built, with large altars ornamented with coloured lamps, pictures, and candlesticks, but the pictures are mostly ghastly daubs. The churches are very lofty, with arched roofs, two having plenty of room for women and capable of holding perhaps 500 and 800 persons. After inspecting them we went round the village, the streets of which are irregular and dirty, the ground broken and unlevel, and the houses small and often dilapidated, and visited Mudirs Georges and Yusof. The people are not all agriculturists, many of them being mule-drivers, there being at least 300 mules belonging to the village, the women of which wear peculiar headdresses. In this vicinity are two small lakes. At 9 p.m. we held a reception, and a large party came to relate their grievances, chiefly in connection with the priest Gendis's Christmas Eve affair, who said that Yusof had got over the priests by presents of crosses and gold embroidered petticoats, and that they had no supporters; also they would accept the Patriarch if he would reject the Pope's Bull, and if he was properly elected. The number of families here is about 1,000, comprising 750 "Dries" (Roman Catholics), and 250 "Wets" (Protestants); the "Wets" had four or five rooms which were used as chapels, and when any priests came on a visit they were put up by Mutran Georges. The Bat al-Abuk consisted of twenty families, who were all "Wets." The

Capudan and other priests could not come to these villages without letters from the Patriarch Frank, who was entirely under the thumb of the Pope's Legate, Monseigneur Leon, who sent a Zaphir to call at Gilda and also sent out his dragoman, David Thome, to precede us and to reassure the "Wets." In Patriarch Yusof's time, twenty years ago, they all accepted fastings, according to the Eastern liturgy, but during the last three years this plan had ceased and they returned to ancient customs. The land around Tilkeyf is wakf and belongs to Mibbe Eupas and other Mohammedan shrines, having been granted to them some centuries ago; the people accordingly pay the tithes to the shrines instead of to the Government. Four Mutrans were present when the Patriarch was elected, two of the bishops having Turkish firmans and two having no authority, but others had since acknowledged him.

February 18th.—Mutran Georges came to-day to interview us and remained an hour. He said that all he demanded was the church, and that he accepted the Pope's Bull and the Patriarch; in fact, he accepted everything that the Pope did. The reason why he had opposed the Pope before and had not accepted the change was that he had heard that Latin priests intended to impose a heavy tax on marriage; this was the only reason. We set out for Al-Kosh to meet the Patriarch who did not put his signature to the petition, while the other "Dries," who sealed it, did so when it was blank paper before it was written on. The "Wets" are not going to build a church now as the others have nearly all come over, and they expect to get the three churches. The "Dries" evidently did not understand the Bull or misrepresented it, while the common people seem to be uninterested as to its contents. They say the Bull only affects bishops and does not after or affect the old canons and rules of the Nestorians. Left at 11 a.m. and after one hour reached Balha, a village of 100 houses and two churches. The churches are nothing to speak of, only one being used, which is called Mar Kariaby, the priests and all the people being "Wets." An hour and a-half later we reached a village named Teleskof, a large village of 350 houses and thirty-one priests, with two churches. We were met by the

priests and some children singing hymns at the entrance, and shown the churches, but the people were uncivil and took no notice of us. The priests showed us a stone found four or five years ago near by on the site of an old convent dedicated to St. Ephraim, which is dated 1092 A.D. Thomas, the Patriarch's dragoman, had just returned from Al-Kosh, whither he had been sent to warn the people against us and teach them what to say to us. There are here 100 "Wets," as all have turned. We then proceeded to Al-Kosh, the country rising all the way, where we arrived at 5 p.m., and went to see the Church of Mar Michael, which is in good order and repair, new altars of stone having been erected by the Romanists, and a new inscription runs round the entrance of this room, which is lofty; the bones of St. Michael are on one side of the room and the bones of Nahum the Prophet are on the other side; the latter, if genuine, which is improbable, must have been stolen from the tomb.

From hence we walked on to the tomb of Nahum the Al-Koshite, which is a place of pilgrimage for Jews from all parts and is greatly venerated by them. The tomb is enclosed in a large room, is in good preservation, and has a small table of printed books. Behind a wooden pavilion, enclosed in a frame of wood about four feet high and covered with a dirty green cloth, is an inscription in Hebrew on black marble, built into the wall, and two other tablets near the first, and a third rather high up to the left, but it appears recent. In Nahum's tomb the wall was covered with small pieces of paper affixed to the wall, written in Hebrew, containing probably the names of persons and their wishes, prayers, and petitions. There were several manuscript copies of the book of Nahum in Hebrew, and I was presented with one of these by the keeper of the tomb, which I carried away. There are only four Jewish families at Al-Kosh, all very poor. After this we went to see two other churches, one of which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the other to Mar Georgius, the latter having some pictures done by Dervish Ali, a Persian at Baghdad, who copies European prints for Europeans; in the hot weather a small altar is used outside, the people sitting in the open courtyard. The altars in all these churches are covered

by a hanging curtain in front, which generally has small bells attached to it, and is drawn aside by a rope. Al-Kosh is situated at the very foot of the hills and can be seen from a long distance. The village is built of stone and is very irregular, roughly paved and steep, while the fields and threshing grounds are marked by a stone wall. One large house was built of roughly-squared stones, and the roofs and houses are vaulted as at Mosul; about 500 families reside here altogether. In one church there was a screen in which we saw a small green box with a glass front, having a wax doll inside, intended to represent the infant Jesus dressed in silk petticoats; this church in particular has the most tawdry and trumpery decorations in it. On arriving at the convent we found it to be a large building with a square outer courtyard in a square, or rather quadrangular, open space; the building is very commodious, the church and refectory being on the left, and there is also a double-storied barrack for the monks; other large rooms, stables for fifty animals, and a bakery are also contained in it. The full complement of monks would be about fifty, but we only saw about a dozen, who gave us up the refectory to sit in, which had a stove in it and was very comfortable.

February 19th.—Before starting we had a look at the church which was large and well built with a lofty arched roof and has an altar with six steps. In one corner is the tomb of the Patriarch Yusof with an inscription in Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, giving the date of his death as 1873. There is another large inscription on the opposite side of the church, recording the death of two Abbots, Gabriel and Harmed, of Rabban Hormuzd; Gabriel was massacred in 1832. After another Abbot or Reis, whose name I forget, came Pantos, who rejected the Bull, and the Patriarch was turned out and made to do penance in July, 1878; the present Reis is Ibrahim.

Began the ascent of Rabban Hormuzd at 10.30 a.m., the road, winding along the ravine, denoting much trouble and skill in its construction. The ascent was rather rough on the horses and took us half-an-hour, but the scene on the top was well worth the journey and the view above well repaid us. The convent lies in a south-west direction and in an angle of a vast extent of undulating country,

which includes Mosul on the Tigris. The plain has many villages with gardens and fields golden with corn, a quiet and secluded nook with a convenient portion well sheltered and watered—just the place for a man who wished to retire from the world's alarms; the solemnity of the spot stamps this, and the founder, whoever he may have been, was evidently a man of mark. We were received at the top by the monks, four or five in number, who took us to a small dining room and gave us coffee, after which they showed us over the place, the cave and cells hewn out of the solid rock, which formed a cluster of separate hermitages with little gardens and chapels. The cells are very small, about eight feet square and eight feet high, a bed, a stool, four pictures and a box comprising all the furniture; the path connecting the cells, and forming nearly a semi-circle, is about half-a-mile long, while the number is said to have been originally 583, but by far the greater part of these cells, if indeed so many ever existed, had disappeared from the disintegration of the limestone rock, and the choking up of the doors by the débris washed down from above, the convent and cells being just under the brow of the hill; after which we visited the three chapels.

Mosul to Nimrood.

April 9th, 1880.—Left Mosul a little after one. The country at first was cultivated and then came undulating prairie, with low ridges to right and in front, over which the camels moved better and faster than we expected. After travelling twelve miles we passed a deserted village called Saheyyi, the people having gone to Mosul. At 6.30 p.m. we camped for the night, having come sixteen miles in a westerly direction.

April 10th.—Heavy dew last night. Started at 6 a.m. and found the country still rising with a hill to the right. At 10 a.m. we reached Halebijesh, a large artificial mound, apparently the remains of a kasr or palace, where Layard, about thirty years ago, ran trenches and excavated to some extent, but unsuccessfully, of which we could see two galleries or trenches at the side and one on the top. There

is a good spring of water and two or three karezes here, but the Arabs ascribed these waterworks to Layard, and it was here that Tell Afr brought us a sheep and some butter. The Kariz at Halebijesh joins the Wady Abdan. Left again at 12.15 p.m. and crossed the Wady Halebijesh, then the Wady Ibrahim, and then the Wady Abdan, the latter has three streams which all join the Wady Tharthar above Sifra. Artificial mounds are to be seen here in all directions, with broken pottery, etc. We then came to a nomadic encampment of a section of the great Shammar tribe, offering a very picturesque scene, with hundreds of camels and horses picketed near the black goatshair tents, also sheep and asses, etc. The Arabs crowded round and wanted me to give them a written paper to the effect that two of their tribe, who had been put in prison at Mosul, should be released, as they were not haramies or robbers and were quite innocent. The Wady Abdan is only a small watercourse and has very little water in it. We camped at sundown under Tell Ebri, the distance covered to-day being twenty-seven miles, but found the water very bad and brackish.

April 11th.—Started at 7.30 a.m. over a level treeless plain as before, which is covered only with scanty grass, to the Wady Ebri, now dry but with some deep reaches of rain water in it ; here we halted for half-an-hour, having come about ten miles. Then we journeyed on to the Wady Tharthar, which we reached at 12.30 p.m. This stream is deep and narrow, fringed with tamarisk but no reeds, the bed being fifty feet wide only, the current running about three miles an hour, but the water is extremely nauseous and quite undrinkable and maintains the same character down to Al-Hadthr, the ancient Hattra, but sometimes broader and shallower and reedy ; the Wady Ebri joins it above Sifra. It took us nearly two hours to cross the Tharthar, as the banks were very steep and slippery, and this necessitated unloading the camels. After resting a couple of hours we started again and soon came to an encampment of the Jeboor tribe, where the Shaikh gave us coffee (?) ; the coffee pot was full to the brim of well-stewed berries, but another handful of pounded berries was crammed in and the pot was again boiled.

The Shaikh said he had been imprisoned at Mosul for three months and was not released until he had paid 100 liras to Taborackasset. A shallow stream, called Ghadeer, is crossed on the west side of the Tharthar and has sweet water, one of several minor nullahs which run into Tharthar on the west side. At 6.30 we camped under Tell Abithur, a high mound overhanging Tharthar and commanding a fine view; it is evidently artificial and is famous as the hill on which a battle was fought against the Turks.

April 12th.—Left at 7 o'clock. One hour afterwards we came to Tell Sifra, on the left bank, and a little lower down we found some pits sunk in the bed of the Tharthar, which are used when the stream dries up and are then a little sweeter than the water we found, which was brown, like tar water, and much impregnated with bitumen. A mile further is another mound, on the right bank, near which are some more wells; the Tharthar here has neither tamarisk nor reeds and the banks are lower. The Sullani darab, or rozul road, is an easy ford for camels. After halting here an hour we reached Hadthr about 5 o'clock, passing on the way three deep nullahs called Mithaays, running into Tharthar; skirting a ridge of sandstone which forms a cliff fifty feet high they flow into the river. We found another encampment of Arabs here, some of whom tried to intercept Russell and myself, as we were in advance, but we took no notice of their insolence and they were soon dispersed on the attendants coming up. We found no Arabs camped among the ruins of Al-Hadthr; silence and desolation reigned supreme, and it was with no little interest that I examined the wonderful remains of this long-forgotten city of the past, which has been the abode of owls and foxes for so many centuries. These curious and extensive ruins standing alone in the vast wilderness are as far reaching as they are mysterious. They are mentioned by Ammianus under the name of Halbra and are supposed to be about 1,800 years old, but their history is almost unknown. The town was surrounded by a wall fortified with towers, and in the centre stood the great palace, still in fair preservation, built of square blocks of stone ornamented with sculptures, one of the most common designs being

that known as the egg and tongue ; this building in its prime must have been magnificent. The outlines of the streets and the foundations of many of the houses are still clearly discernible, and the appearance of the deserted city is strange and weird in the extreme. I regretted much not having been provided with a camera to take photographs of the decorations in the palace.

April 13th.—Started at 6.30 and proceeded south-easterly over an undulating prairie, intersected by numerous wadis running into the Tharthar, several of which we crossed, evidently affluents of the Wady Sifra, which joins the Tharthar a long way above Tekrit ; these wadis kept us winding about and made our route very tedious and irregular. This plain is generally covered with short grass and bespangled with wild flowers, many of the plants being locally reputed for their medicinal virtues or used as vegetables, the latter being greatly sought for and proving a valuable food in the late famine. Between this part and Mosul there are many artificial mounds and ruined towns submerged in sand and dust, showing that the country must have been populated in the palmy days of Assyria. We did not arrive at Shargaleh till nearly seven, and then found that the Kalik had not arrived. The wind had been very rough all day. We put up in the house of Ferhan Pasha, chief Shaikh of the Shammar, whom I had met at Baghdad some months before. The house had been built for Ferhan some years before at a cost, it is said, of 1,500 liras, but that, of course, was an exaggeration. The Turkish Government had incurred much obloquy for the treacherous murder of Ferhan's father, Soof Ali, at the hands of Ibrahim Agha, and had done something to compensate Ferhan, who was a man of very different character to Soojak. Part of the building is intended as a barrack for a company of Turkish Zaptiahs, to protect Shargaleh against massacres by the great Anezzeh tribe ; it was in a fine position and fully commands the river, which flows directly under.

April 14th.—I was informed early that morning that the raft with Mr. Russell on board had arrived two days before and was waiting about a mile further on. Soon after Mr. Russell was

seen walking towards the hill, and I went down to meet him. We spent the day at Shargaleh, inspecting the ruins and excavations and it was one of the pleasantest days I had had. Ferhan Kaleb was avaricious and troublesome and hindered preparations for Russell's return.

April 15th.—It was a cold night, but in the morning they started off, expecting to get home by land in two days. Shargaleh, or Kilah Shargat, is a high irregular mound, partly artificial and partly natural, rising above the plain to the height of about 150 feet, on the right or western bank of the Tigris, and is said to be about 4,500 yards or 14,000 feet in circumference. It is by far the grandest and most imposing mass of ruins I have seen in Assyria, and is probably also one of the most ancient sites of civilization in the land. I examined the ruins with great interest, although there is nothing remarkable to be seen in the way of sculptures and inscriptions whatever. Layard's excavations had little or no results. The claim to this mound by the Jeboor and Shammar tribes was settled a few years ago by the Turkish Government, who placed a company of zaptiahs here for the protection of the Shammar, as I mentioned above; I wished I could have remained longer. We left Shargaleh on the morning of the 15th, and the river being very full and strong we were carried down by the current with great swiftness, the eddies making the raft spin round occasionally rather too smartly to be pleasant and placing us in some jeopardy; the raft was composed of inflated goatskins, fastened to poles and planks, and the hut we occupied on it being constructed of sticks and felt rugs and divided into two compartments for Mr. Ellis and myself. Another raft following us was occupied by the servants and cowasses and the kitchen. Having arrived at Tekrit, which is famous as the birthplace of Saladin, and is situated on the right bank, we anchored for a time as I was desirous of landing and seeing the town. It appeared to be a wretched town of about 1,500 houses, but has a fine old castle standing in a commanding position overhanging the Tigris and having an imposing appearance. The Turkish Government steamer *Mosul* was at anchor here on the left bank with a cargo

from Baghdad, and a caravan of about 1,000 camels was waiting to receive the goods and transport them to Kerkook. We walked through the town, which is very irregular, and, like Mosul, very steep, but is without a bazaar, the people being mostly cultivators.

Left Tekrit at 8.30 a.m. and went to a town called Samarra, the current being here slower than yesterday. Arrived at 5 p.m. and walked up to see the town, which is much smaller than Tekrit, having only 300 houses ; very few of the people are weavers. The Kaimakan was absent and the Kazi was in charge, who came down to the shore and met us as we were looking at the mosques and took us to his house, where he treated us very civilly. There are two mosques here, one of them belonging to the Shiahs and has a gilded dome, and contains the tomb of two Imams and a lady. The Sunni mosque, with a smaller Kashani dome, is separated from the Shiahs by a partition wall and contains the cavity in which the Imam mysteriously disappeared. The hole is called Mukan al-Ghabeh and is down two flights of half-a-dozen steps each, while over it is an arched roof level with the ground, the hole being in the mosque itself ; the Kazi was very communicative and seemed unprejudiced. Samarra is surrounded with a wall of the usual kind with arched recesses inside, built about thirty-eight years ago. Outside the wall is a curious pillar or tower with a spiral staircase, over 100 feet, of the time of the Khalifs, and close by is an oblong space of some extent, enclosed by a high wall with many semi-circular buttresses, very thick and apparently of the same age as the tower. It is said to have belonged to a mosque, the outline of which is pointed out inside, but the wall is too high to support this hypothesis ; it was more probably a harem. This tower was called Malwiyah, and was built by the Khalif Motasim in order that from its great height the call to prayer might be heard all over the city. The old town of Samarra was used by the Khalif Motasim as his capital in A.H. 221 [A.D. 835], and became a magnificent city, the Great or Jani Mosque rivalling that of Damascus. Many splendid palaces were built by the succeeding Khalifs on both banks of the Tigris and the city almost equalled Baghdad in size. The name was changed to Surmanrai,

meaning "It pleaseth him who sees it." Seven Khalifs occupied it, the last being Al-Motamid, who returned to Baghdad as his capital in 279 A.H. [A.D. 892]. The three last Imams died here, the tenth and eleventh, while the twelfth, Al-Kaim, mysteriously disappeared and is expected to reappear as the Mahdi. The hole or cavity in the mosque is used as a receptacle for the prayers and requests of the pious, who write their wishes on a slip of paper and throw it in, in the sure and certain hope that they will be granted.

Route to Mosul.

Arbela is decidedly artificial with a foundation of brickwork, its circumference being about 4,000 feet. The lower town lying on the south side was anciently much larger; the Zab being, except at the ford, about twelve feet deep, very clear and full of fish. There are many Turkish, Yazidi and Christian villages in this plain. The Bamdus, or Khazro Soo, joins the Zab before it reaches the Tigris, and is very rapid, its source being near Accra, the direction, after the Zab, being westerly and north-westerly. Rennell thought the village of Kirmatis is the same as Gourcomala, but Rich does not think so, and says that Nineveh had a double wall and moat.

The unpropitious state of the weather on this march was a great disappointment to me as I had hoped to have been able to arrange a halt here on this plain, or at least to have had time to ride over and examine the site of Alexander the Great's most important and glorious battle and the scene where Darius Codomannus, by abandoning his troops, lost his empire and brought his dynasty to a close. It seems almost inconceivable that an able and experienced general like Darius could have chosen a spot such as that described by the historian to await the advance of the invader with the broad, deep and rapid river Lycus or Zab immediately in the rear, and, moreover, that he should have fled the field at the very moment when, with the advantages of greatly superior numbers, he might by a skilful manœuvre have completely surrounded and overwhelmed his enemies.

The subject is an interesting one and I regretted not being able to observe the scene of the famous action more closely. The upper town of Arbela is about 850 feet above the sea, and owing to the strong current of the Zab our men had to swim their horses and mules over, while the grooms crossed on inflated skins.

The next river we reached was the Khazer or Ralanis of the Greeks, while the wind from the high snowy mountains of Kurdistan was very bitter and severe as we rode towards Mosul.

At Padan the Syro-Chaldean Mutran was absent so I did not see him. In Kurdistan rhododendrons and oleanders abound, and here, as in Upper Mesopotamia, wild flowers are in great variety and profusion. The plain of Gangamela, chosen by Darius for the battle ground, is very well adapted for cavalry; the village of Karamissa is supposed to be the Gangamela of Alexander. There is a spurious tomb of the Virgin near here. There are three languages spoken in this tract, Kurdish, Arabic and Turkish, but the last is that of the governing clan, who hold the same position in Eastern Turkey as the English in India; Turkish is almost unknown in the towns and villages.

At Kerkook there is a tomb of Daniel and of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but it is not authenticated. At Kufri we cross the boundary between Turkish Arabia and Kurdistan and find ourselves among a people differing in race, character and language from the Arabs, while the country in front of us is an improvement on that behind us and is more fertile, there being more cultivation, more water and more people, though the continual scarcity of trees and shrubs in this land is very remarkable, and this applies generally to all the country between Kufri and Mosul.

The lesser Zab reaches the Tigris below Salt Koor, and another river is the Taza or the Fresh river. The site of the Battle of Arbela is puzzling, as the distances given by the Greeks do not agree with the ground. The distance between Lycus or Zab and the Bamdus is now 25 miles, whereas the Greeks say it is 500 or 600 stadia, or between 57 to 69 miles. Nineveh lies between a range of low hills and the Tigris about one and a-half miles, but the ruins extend a long way on the left bank of the river.

Mosul.

I remained at Mosul about two months and during that time was engaged chiefly in carrying out the object of my mission, investigating the causes of dissension and strife among the Christians, smoothing their differences, arbitrating between them, and dividing the churches, olive groves and other ecclesiastical property. I exchanged visits with the Mutasserrif or Governor, the French Consul, the Jacobite Patriarch, the Dominicans and the leaders of the Christian communities, and heard from each of the history and present condition of the religious troubles that unfortunately raged among them. Before leaving Mosul I sent in a full report to the British Ambassador at Constantinople, but as Sir H. Layard was then leaving, owing to the change of Government in England, the matter, I believe, remained in abeyance. The initiative of the enquiry was due to Sir H. Layard, who was thoroughly conversant with the whole subject and could have brought it to a successful issue, but Gladstone, in his policy, took no interest in it whatever.

In company with Mr. Russell I explored the neighbouring countries and visited the churches and other points of interest. Much of my spare time I spent in examining the ruins of Nineveh, Kuyunjik, and Nebbi Yunnus, superintending the excavation and unearthing the tablets in the Royal Library and other work there being carried out for the British Museum by Mr. Nimrood Rassam in the absence of his uncle, Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, who was then in England and whom I met afterwards on my return to Baghdad.

Rabban Hormuzd.

According to Burton, Rabban Hormuzd is in the gorge of a mountain range about thirty miles north of Mosul, and belongs to the Chaldeans, being visited by Rich, who mentions the inundation. Between Rich's visit in 1820 and 1843 it was twice plundered by

Kurds, who killed several priests and burned the books. Rabban Hormuzd was the founder of the monastery and of others about the fourth century, the monks being of the order of St. Anthony. Rich says there are several versions of the origin of Rabban Hormuzd, one that Hormuzd was killed in the persecution of Yezdejbid about 384 A.H. [A.D. 994] and was buried here. The convent is in a rocky defile and the cells are much scattered, some being remote and almost inaccessible, being approached by terraces. The monks are badly clothed and poorly fed and only get meat twice a year, do not speak to each other, and live in cells about eight feet square, and have lost all their books through a deluge.

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